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A MAIDEN'S PERIL.

Story of Love's Sacrifice---Temptations of a Beautiful Young Girl Who Fled From the Man She Loved.

By MARY BELLE BENNETT.

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CHAPTER I.
A REMARKABLE WOOING.

Over the great Horton house of stone, standing gloomy and alone like a sentient and sorrowing thing in the midst of its magnificent park of century-old oaks, there brooded the solemn, self-conscious air of silence and awe which comes to the places of earth where lie the dead.

Those who, busy with preparations for the burial, moved about the lofty apartments, the wide halls and the handsome galleries, did so with steps ostentatiously light and soft. Those who spoke did so in whispers, as though fearful of disturbing the repose of the grim bit of clay which had once been master there, now lying cold and rigid beneath its covering of white in the splendid parlor.

Outside, like a blessing from the hand of God, who consoles as well as chastens, the warm and sparkling sunlight of a perfect June afternoon lay over field and highway. Birds sang gaily in the slowly-swinging boughs of the giant trees which here and there crept close enough to the old mansion to brush its walls and old-fashioned window panes with their feathery fingers, and peered curiously from ball-like nests suspended in the swaying vines which everywhere clustered about the great galleries. The slow hum of insect life came drowsily up from the many flower beds which brightened sunny glades in the great park, and away toward the back of the house the murmur of a dashing rivulet caught the ear. It was a fair scene, outside the heavy walls of the stately old mansion, that sweet June day, but the hand and brain that had made and kept it fair for so many years---so rare as the sun of earth can direct or control the forces of nature---lay pulseless and still.

Death had come to the great mansion stealthily and unawares. In the early morning William Horton, the master, had mentioned a slight pain in the head, but had gone about his duties in the library as usual; at noon he had ceased dictating business detail and correspondence to his daughter, who had then left the room, leaving her father alone; four hours later they found him there at the library table just as his daughter had left him, his hands resting upon a pile of papers, his head bowed upon his breast, dead.

Paralysis, the doctors said, and paralysis the coroner said when summoned; but the friends of the dead millionaire was removed to the forty parlor and prepared for the last resting place, no official investigation being made, in fact, when a surgeon was suggested by John Horton, a nephew of the deceased, the county official had treated the matter scornfully.

"There is no use," he had said. "The man died of paralysis. Any fool can see that, and I'm not going to put the county to the cost of a jury---not much!"

Perhaps the coroner was right. Indeed he was, from his own point of view, for an election was to be held in the fall, and he was a candidate for renomination and re-election on an "economy" platform. It was afterwards mentioned that the nephew seemed to be very angry with the official for his dictatorial ways, and his quick manner of settling the matter for good and all.

Twenty-four hours had now elapsed since the discovery of the body in the library, and all was in readiness for the burial, which was to take place on the morrow. In all the world there were but two of the dead man's blood to summon to the funeral, which was to be held in the spacious parlors where the body lay. These were the daughter, who had last seen him alive, and a nephew, the John Horton who had protested against the hasty action of the coroner. Both of these were already in the house, so there would be no delay on account of distant relations or friends.

William Horton, the dead man, had in his youth belonged to the poor and "never do well" branch of the Horton family. His father had at times been an artist, an editor, a writer of fiction, but always a dreamer and a man utterly unfit to grapple with the world. He had married young, as is the custom of those who have no money to marry on and no prospects of ever having any, and had died young, leaving his wife, a child-hearted girl of twenty, to struggle alone as best she could with a lusty boy of two, at once her comfort and her despair. She had no relations to fall back fell back upon the universal Father who receives us all into his heart when the world rejects our claims for sympathy and mercy, and went quietly to sleep in the church yard near the great city wherein she had toiled night and day for her child and herself---and had failed.

Then Oliver Horton, the owner---the proud and haughty owner---of the Horton estate, with its thousands of acres of rich farming land, its hundreds of city and village tenements---any one of which would have made the wife of his dead brother a happy woman---and its costly old mansion which had been in the family for years, sent for the boy and gave him food to eat and a place to sleep---and little else.

The boy grew up as best he could, receiving no kisses and plenty of kicks, until he was eighteen, when he cursed his uncle to his face, boldly and loudly, before the wondering servants, and ran away to sea. The boy had good blood in him. He possessed his father's studious disposition and his uncle's lusty strength and iron will. He studied and worked and saved and made a drudge of himself from common sailor up, until, at the age of thirty, he found himself a captain of an ocean liner and a rich man. Also a single man, which, as he had been a wanderer, was perhaps just as well.

One day he took into his head the notion that there was as much money than the sea was likely to bestow upon him, and he made a dash into Wall street with his entire fortune and came out covered with glory and heavy with the worldly goods of those who had opposed him in the battle of stocks and bonds. Then he gave up his position on the sea and settled down to a studious life, for all the blood of his studious father which ran in his veins gained in strength as he grew older.

"You frightened me," she cried.

One day, too, Oliver Horton made a dash into Wall street and came out ninged. In the language of the street he had been up against a cinch, and there was nothing for it but to sell out his real estate and settle up before the courts took charge of the fine Horton property in the interest of his creditors. It may be that he had been in the lucky fool watch had turned out so victoriously for the captain, only on the wrong side of it; but, however, that may be, certain it is that the captain came out with much money, and that his uncle came out ruined.

And so the captain, after many days of bargaining with his bankrupt uncle, became the owner of the Horton farms, and the Horton tenements in New York and Boston, and Horton house. He was very kind and gracious about the matter, as he could well afford to be, and invited his uncle to remain at Horton house as long as he desired; in short, to pass his remaining days there, which invitation the aged man gladly accepted for his young son as well as himself, his wife having been dead a year, and seemed quite at home as a dependent in the house where he had once been master. In fact, up to the very day of his death Oliver Horton lorded it over the servants in his old, imperious manner, and William Horton, who had been practically bounden out of the house as a boy, said not a word in protest. When Oliver died, which was but a few years after the sale, the son still remained. He was retained and in every way treated as the heir of his uncle.

But the hopes of the boy were soon to be dashed rudely to the ground, for at the age of forty, when his nephew was a fine, sprightly lad of ten, William Horton took unto himself a wife, the daughter of a retired sea captain, who lived in the neighboring village of Cloverdale, and a daughter soon making her appearance---much to the disgust of the father, who had set his heart on having a son---the nephew's fat was all in the fire, as the neighbors loosely expressed the situation. Mrs. Horton did not long survive the birth of her daughter, and so the father, a quiet, studious man, and the nephew, a lad of spirit, were left to get on together in the gloomy old house.

The nephew was an unruly youth at the age of fifteen, when Elia Horton began to give promise of possessed of remarkable beauty. He was as cunning and selfish a youngster, in his way, as one would be likely to find in a year's search, but he had his father's sturdy figure and handsome face, and managed to keep on very good terms with his cousin and his uncle. And why should he not? And why should he not? he thought, day after day, "but the Horton property may yet become mine?" Then he would cast sly and calculating glances at the fair-haired little tot playing about the house with her dolls and her kittens.

And, indeed, as he advanced in years, fortune seemed for a time to encourage the young man in his hopes of succeeding to the property which his father had squandered so recklessly. For the captain never got over the disappointment which he had experienced at the birth of a daughter instead of a son, and he still cherished the thought of seeing the Horton property descend in the Horton name forever. And how could this be better brought about than by the marriage of the two cousins? This would enable him to leave his only child wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice and still provide for the son of his brother. Just how far he was influenced in such thoughts by the penniless nephew, no one who heard him express himself on the subject had any means of knowing, but certain it is that young John Horton seemed to exert a strange influence over his uncle.

He had everything to gain by such a course. "Who knows," he thought, day after day, "but the Horton property may yet become mine?" Then he would cast sly and calculating glances at the fair-haired little tot playing about the house with her dolls and her kittens.

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John Horton, cunning, unscrupulous, ambitious, fed fat on the hopes thus engendered, but when the girl arrived at an age capable of understanding what was expected of her, she rebelled, much to the surprise of the father and the dismay of the lover. Then there were troubulous times in the old house. The father took no pains to conceal his anger at what he considered the obstinacy of his daughter, and shut himself up in the library; the nephew sauntered in his room and smoked an incredible quantity of black cigars, while the one who was really the most interested of all came and went pretty blue eyes were red and almost dim, and took long walks through the fields and meadows of the great place.

And why should Miss Ella recoil at the mention of a match which to the world at large seemed so suitable and so desirable? Eyes in her own heart she did not know. Was there another? Well, there were those she liked, of course, but as for loving anyone, even the fairy creature of sweet sixteen, the age of romance and affection, yet not know! Of course she could not know, for no one here had ever breathed those words of love into her ear, only once upon a time Maurice Andrews had said—not plainly, but delightfully dark when they were driving home from the ball—but no matter what he said! The girl had never forgotten the words, so they must have been important to her, and they were for you, my fair reader, have listened to softly-spoken words on dark nights, when the stars twinkled, when you and he were alone, the like of which no other ear but his had ever heard since the world began, and perhaps you have treasured them in your breast, and will keep them locked in the sacred memory until the grave closes over your unsatisfied heart!

And in the heat of the battle, William Horton, proud chief of all his library, as he already been related, and the young girl's grief was very great because of the anger that had moved the last days against her.

The very silence of the house, that beautiful June day, seemed to add to her grief, so she took a book and went out into the park and sunshine which seems to bear a balm for all human woes, turning her light step toward a grassy knoll from which, when a fine view of the country for miles around might be had on a clear day.

She was tall and rather stately for her age, this girl of sixteen, and there was about her finely-developed figure a grace that charmed the eye and appealed to the artistic nature in which in some degree dwells in every human heart. Her eyes were blue as the violets which grew in their roadside hedges in early spring, her complexion of a blending of white and red, and her hair seemed a mass of finely spun gold, so brown and bronzed was it. Wilful hair it was, too, flying in the wind in a maddening manner about peach-tinted cheeks and shell-like ears, refusing, no, daring, to be confined straightest little nose imaginable, and gently pouting mouth, having with it a child reluctance, the lips which seemed made to speak gentle and loving words, and which when in repose full and kissable. Oh, you have at some time in your youth seen such a face, gentle and sweet, endowed with its perfection the night after the vision, and longed to look upon it again and again, catch a look of recognition from the beautiful eyes which had looked at you only for the fairest face since Adam's reign! Has your wife blue eyes, man of the world? Then you married her, short day it is, because of this other blue-eyed creature whom you met and loved in the far of life, and you must never let her know—never! That's why!

As Ella reached the summit of the knoll and threw herself into a rustic seat, the effect of a shadow at her feet caused her to start, and a young man, tall, blooming, handsome stepped out from the little opening. He was neatly dressed in a hunting suit of gray, which set off his athletic figure to excellent advantage, and wore a gray cap, which could not be made to cover half the waving brown hair. He was perhaps one and twenty, and was the heir to a fine estate in the adjoining county. A well-looking young fellow was Maurice Andrews and the sunlight which at that illumined his face seemed to make him all the more presentable to the young girl who had never thought of him as of so be advanced to her side.

"You frightened me," she finally said, but the glad light in her pure eyes and the blush on her face told him that she was not beyond pardon for the seeming offense. The young man threw himself on the greensward at the girl's feet.

"I have missed you terribly," he said, settling his face to her.

A painful blush overspread the girl's cheeks. Had their little meetings, never proceeded and no for just a moment, so much a matter of course that the absence of a day was worthy of a remark?

"We are in deep trouble down at the house," she said in reply. "You have heard?"

"Yes," was the soft-spoken reply. "I have heard, and wonder that I been wondering who will now back the wooing of Mr. John Horton."

"Hush," remonstrated the girl. "What put the notion into your head that the wooing needs any backing, if wooing he is?"

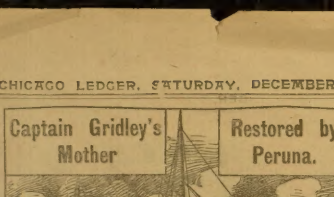
"Oh, the neighborhood rings with the private affairs of Horton house. I wonder you have not heard what people are saying about your being—"

"Hush," said the girl. "I have no lovers, and it is wrong of the people to discuss my affairs."

"But they do," said Maurice, "and I am sorry you have overheard what I said about John Horton. But things are all so different now, and you will need a friend, and I can't be your friend, and meet you every day, and not let you know that I love you. Oh, Ella—"

But how can a young man talk—a young man in a gray hunting suit, if you please—with the rosy palm of a young girl's hand pressing upon his lips, and being kissed, and made much of?

"You must not say such things," said the girl. "You know that I am much too young to think of lovers for many years to come, and, then, you really are such a great bear that I don't know about—"



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They were alone and the June sun was shining gaily down upon a happy world, musical with the song of birds and fragrant with the bloom of flowers, and they were both young, and fair to see, so what was there to prevent the great hour taking undue advantage of Miss Sweet Sixteen, and holding her to his heart, and kissing her, oh, so fondly, on her lips, her eyes, her neck, her hair?

Oh, the ways of youth are wondrous and audacious ways, for the girl had not yet said one word of love to him, and he was pressing so assiduously. But she did not resist! Indeed, no, no, no, not for one, three they sat in the sunshine and were happy—foolishly happy, as every living creature was fully-driven world, but happy time it was!

And from the shrubbery behind, at times when no other eyes than those of the trees were observing, there peered the evil and jealous face of John Horton looked out upon them in rage and hate.

But it cannot be summer all the year, and the sun will not always shine from midheaven, and love cannot exist on every thing that springs from the selfish and unrelenting heart of man!

CHAPTER II.

WHAT DID THE FARM HAND HEAR?

The day following the above little time at the great Horton place, and John Horton, his heart seething with jealousy, his brain stung with the bitterness of revenge, left the shelter of the trees from which he had observed the pastoral interview between his cousin and Maurice Andrews, he came upon a group of field hands who were lounging in the shade of one of the out-buildings.

As he approached the little gathering from the rear, he saw that his presence was not observed, and while he paused in his spying nature, he advanced stealthily in order that he might overhear the conversation there being carried on. He was in no mood to listen to the complaints and grumblings of the unfortunates of their pay or the number of their working hours, for the hands always have been there, and he had heard and seen at the meeting of the two lovers from which he had risen up with the stern reality which had indescribably changed his whole life in the few minutes years of his life. He had fought against the half-concealed contempt of his cousin, he had fought for the girl's affection, he had lived on the hope that in the not distant future he would become, from a contraditor and her father's commands and entreaties, her husband, but all was now banished. She loved another! As long as her heart had remained absolutely free, there was always a chance for him to win her, and she might be brought to regard him in a tenderer light, but now that the young beast full of the bliss which is above all things on earth, and which comes only with first love with no father to enforce his suit, the case was indeed hopeless.

When you were stricken, my gentleman reader, were you in love And down in your heart was there some hope worth thinking of but the pressure of a tinsel palm and the sweet clasp of warm arms around your neck And your lips touched a lock of brown, or a peach-tinted cheek, or even an ivory-like neck, or a bit of crimson velvet lips, and you wondered how the men of the world could live and breathe and not die in this one particular sweetheart of yours! Ah, took in your aching eyes, then, my gray-haired man, and see if this divine creature whose breath was like fresh grapes, and whose slender form your arms just matched ed, is sitting there at the foot of the table!

John Horton believed himself to be desperately, madly, in love with his cousin. When he saw her so folded in the arms of Maurice Andrews and heard their whispered exchange of vows, he could have murdered them both, and strutted in the deed. But how much of his feeling toward the pretty Ella was pure, and how much was worthy of him, time will discover. In this jealous and passionate mood, then, he was not inclined to listen long to the gossip of the workmen, and was about to turn away when a sentence spoken by an old servant of the family attracted his attention.

"I, for one," the listener heard the man saying, "don't believe the estate will go to the girl. I know William Horton well in his lifetime, and he was not a man to be balked in anything he undertook and take the defeat kindly. No, Miss Ella wouldn't get a cent as he knew, and little of his money will go her way."

There were numerous grunts of disapproval and then a younger man said:

"I'll bet a dollar against a dime that will the place to John Horton, and I won't believe he hasn't even if I see it in the will with my own eyes."

The listener turned pale, and leaned against the building for support, and yet for a moment he could not understand why such seemingly innocent words should have so affected him.

"Well," said another, "that's just what he has done, and I know because I heard what's been going on here during the past three months."

The little group gathered closer about the speaker.

"Come, Bill," one of the men said, "tell us what you have in mind. Out with it, old boy."

Thus urged, the fellow, a short, squat, ill-looking fellow, with a sinister, pockmarked face and bristling shock of bright red hair, who was dressed in a full suit of blue jeans, and who evidently was being made fun of by a much larger man, thus urged, the fellow began his story, and said:

"Two months ago, about the time when the row about the brokeup warrings took place, I was out on the gallery one night, not being able to sleep. Along about midnight I heard the gate down at the entrance open and close, and then the quick steps of a gallopping horse coming up to the house.

"I crawled until the beast got almost up to the place where I had settled myself for a quiet smoke, and then dodged, not caring to be seen out there. I recognized both the animal at that hour of the night, that was being ridden by Horton, and the man behind a like bush, which was just getting in leaf. He was fresh, and seemed to mount, tie his horse to the tree there by the west pillar, and walk up the gallery steps. I heard the door open, and the man behind which there had been a bright light in the hall, and then I heard no more, for I got to the first window it was thrown open and I had to fall upon his feet as Mr. Horton holding the lamp in his hand, and looking out into the darkness. Now, who do you suppose he saw?"

"Go on," whispered one of the men. "How could a guess at a thing like that? Your business was?"

"Well," continued the narrator, "it was Horton's lawyer, all the way up from the city, and he had ridden hard, too. When Mr. Horton opened the window the lawyer stepped inside, and before the sash was closed I heard the lawyer say, in these words spoken:

"'Have you brought the will?' asked Horton, and the lawyer said 'Yes,' and they sat down at a table, all littered with papers, and began writing. And what do you think? A new will was drawn that night, leaving the property to John Horton."

The listener grew faint and staggered as if he would fall to the ground. Could this wonderful thing be true? If such a magnificent provision had been made for him—one which ensured him power as well as luxury and the gratification of every whim —why had his benefactor never mentioned the matter to him? But perhaps a letter of instruction would accompany the document. He had hoped for this, but as one hopes for the impossible and the unattainable, never dreaming that his earnest wishes would ever be realized. Ah, the pretty Ella might find different words with which to greet him now!

"How do you know a new will was drawn that night?" demanded one of the men. "Would you hear what was being said through the windows?"

"No," was the reply, "I couldn't, but I wanted to know what was going on and I took means to post myself."

"Perhaps you sneaked into the house?" suggested one.

"It would be just like you," sneered another.

"And if I hadn't," was the angry reply. "It's little of the steward I've heard. And now you may go to the lawyer, or to Mr. Horton, for the rest of it, for no more will you get from me."

The fellow's mates urged, threatened, and in their small way tried to bribe, but the man walked away in a passion, the important secret still locked in his own breast. Then John Horton, far more angry and annoyed because of the interruption than any of the others could be, retraced his steps and pursued his way toward the house, none of the men being aware that their conversation had been overheard. He passed through the grove with the world in staircase, and sought his room on the second floor. He was alone with his thoughts.

The abruptly terminated story which he had heard seemed to him like a chapter out of a fairy tale. He must find the man who had heard the conversation, and question him. Still, would that be the wisest course to pursue? Might not any answer to appear too anxious. He must think it out.

"If such a will was made, and properly signed and witnessed," he mused, "there will be a time enough when it is offered for probate, for public sympathy will all on the side of the girl. It may be that the validity of the document will be disputed. If I could only do something now before the will is produced, to make it seem less harsh, less unkind to the girl, it would have a favorable effect. Yes, some thing must be done to make the unfatherly act appear less cruel, to make it appear to have been premeditated and carefully planned. The blame must in no means assigned for the unnatural act, and the girl must not be left entirely penniless. Perhaps I can write a letter—"

He pondered over this view of the matter for a few minutes, this cunning, unscrupulous schemer, looking at the problem in every light, and then with an evil smile of victory on his face, and, with his eyes dashing with pleasure and avarice, he sat down and drew forth a sheet of paper. But the handwriting on the sheet over which he bent did not in the least resemble his own.

He wrote long and steadily, and the ground was the bottom of the sheet reached when he spread a closely-written sheet of foolscap before his host, and drew forth the envelope which accompanied it. He had been taken that very day from the dead body of the lawyer.

Having placed the document, securely sealed, in his pocket, he arose and at once proceeded to gather up every scrap of paper lying about the room, and, having done so, he threw the foolscap sheet contained over and over again, and so numerous were the scraps of writing that when they had been thrown carelessly aside during the work of destruction, they were not collected, peering into every nook and corner of the room to see that no scrap had been burned them at the grate.

He had scarcely completed his task when the door of the room opened and a young lady entered. Horton looked up with a frown, but his face cleared and he at once changed in an instant when he saw the fair face which nestled within the frame of the doorway. Laura Canton certainly was a beautiful creature, with her slender form, wavy golden hair, her dark eyes and her midnight hair. And there was a maddening glow in the soft velvet of those same eyes, the sensuous figure with its firm contour and its delicate rounding, the rose-red lips, clad now in a loose gown of brilliant crimson, which, while it enhanced the beauty of the form seemed in contrast more like the passion ivory that men have died to attain. Laura Canton was a beautiful girl, but pure, so transparent, so finely molded were her features, that the light from the midnight face as she advanced into the room seemed to be finely shaped hand upon John Horton's arm.

Laura Horton was the companion of the motherless girl in the house. They had been chums at an academy, had dreamed the same dreams, had studied their lessons together, and had vowed eternal love and trust, after the manner of young girls. But when the girl's father had died and left leaving the girl absolutely alone in the world, and without the means of support, and so Ella had brought her to Horton house, where she had enjoyed almost equal with every privilege the mistress had. How she chose to repay this kindness will develop as the story goes on, but at the time the friendship was a true one, existed one, and the love which Laura bore to whom she had so generously given shelter, when the girls were alone, they discussed their little secrets and comparing their bright ideals as Sweet Sixteen will the world over, and Laura was all about two years the senior of her friend.

"I have been looking for you all the afternoon," said the girl smiling up into the handsome face of the young man. "Have you been away?"

"I have been very busy," was the reply, and Laura noted the speaker's face thought of what might be the outcome of the day's work by the men doing. John Horton was not yet thoroughly hardened in crime.

"You are always busy," pouted the girl. "Do you know where Ella is? Has she been with you?"

Laura looked keenly into her companion's face as she spoke, and there seemed to be a world of meaning in her winsome, reckless eyes. Horton started in alarm. Had she observed him sipping upon the lovers there in their leafy retreat? His eyes held her's for a moment, and then she turned away with a suggestive little shake of her fluffy head. Then he understood that she knew the truth.

"I have not seen Ella for hours," Horton finally replied, half-hesitatingly. Then, gaining courage, he added, a touch of re-

proach in his tones. "Can you tell me, Laura, how frequently these meetings on the knoll have taken place?"

This was the hour for which Laura Canton had waited long, the hour when she might have something in common with John Horton, from which all the world was shut out; the hour in which she might sympathize with him, and pity him, and exhibit for his benefit, in all its beauty and purity, the loving side of her nature. Yes, her hour had come, and she might—but why is it necessary to write such things of a creature so fair? She might, by good management, by saying little, and informing much, make more headway here than she had ever hoped to accomplish at the first stage of confidence. The truth must be told. She was madly in love with John Horton, and she envied and hated the girl who possessed his heart and countet it as less than the soil beneath her dainty feet. She hesitated a moment, and Horton asked another question.

"Have you known of these—these disgraceful meetings alone?" he demanded.

"To what meetings do you refer?" asked the girl, innocently. "Surely, I am not my brother's keeper."

"You know very well what I mean, Laura," said Horton. "Ella has no secrets from you. Tell me the truth."

"Your wife said, half-defiantly, 'I have known all along,'" and the soft voice broke and the beautiful eyes filled with tears, "and I have long wanted to put you on your guard, and to let you know how sorry I am for you, both."

Just enough, little schemer, just enough to set the jealous man to suspecting more than he had any right to expect, for the interesting on the knoll which he had by no means by sight upon had been wholly accidental and had also been the very first at which words of love had been spoken. But, of course, Laura did not tell him this. She said not a word in defense of the girl who loved her, and who had given her a home and made an equal of her, but in the angry lover think whatever his evil passions taught. The pretty little sinner!

From all of which it may be inferred that Miss Laura Canton was hardly a desirable companion for the innocent girl who had now to face the world alone, fatherless, and with those most cruel working selfishly and in secret against her.

CHAPTER III.

CRUEL! CRUEL! CRUEL!

Surely, all the craft and deception of the world of humanity lurk not in the temples of the many changes, nor yet beneath the snowy hair and greed-hardened eyes of old age, for these things though can sometimes make a pretty showing.

In lace-draped and perfume-laden parlors and dressing rooms is all to be on guard over all the finer feelings of the heart, for Sweet Sixteen and Twenty and Over Forty almost any charming number of years may long ago have become intoxicated with the deadly virus of greed, and selfishness and deception.

In this small comedy now passing, haltingly enough, before the eyes of the reader, Laura Canton is playing her part well. She is deceiving John Horton to her heart's content. She is causing him to believe that Ella has sinned irreparably in meeting Maurice Howe, and she is simulating a pretty dismay at the discovery, looking pretty and demure, and innocently above all such emotions as have conquered her friend, and seeming sympathetic every moment of the time.

And Horton rages and looks to the gentle little deceiver for sympathy and advice. After all, what a faint battle does worldly wisdom make when pitted against the selfish desires and impulses of the human heart. A little calm thought would have shown John Horton that Laura Canton was not the slightest deception practiced, by his cousin so far as his interests were concerned. In her frank, impetuous way, which he thought so charming, she had frequently declared that she hated him and would never become his wife. But he was looking at things through the eyes of Laura Canton then, and he came to think of himself as a deceived fellow, and one doubly wronged.

Now, don't raise your hands in horror and declare that never in all the world was there another such little traitoress as this handsome young girl, one so scrupulous and so brazen. Remember that she was in love with a man who had made the often quoted statement that all is fair in love. Must have been a very hard and cruel and not fair in anything that brings distress and the shadow of unmerited shame to the innocent. For months Laura had seen the tempest of passion in the heart of John Horton, and had construed indifference in the—of his cousin, and all the time her heart—yearning—"I could have sworn," said one such look, one soft word, as daily came to Ella, unsought and either scorned or unnoticed. During all this time Horton had been in the habit of laying many of his troubles and fancies at her feet, but in such a way that the longed-for moment of complete confidence had not arrived, and the matter of the meeting on the knoll became a secret between them.

And in love, as in all else are men where affairs of the heart are concerned, had in a measure ceased to be, but had never suspected that she loved him. Well, there are scores of the beautiful unspeakable in feminine heart—which it may be as well not to know—though a man had that to be loved in vain, and without outward show, she had never loved without hope. Deep down in her scheming little heart she devoutly believed that she would some day be mistress of the situation, that some day John Horton would bow down before her and ask her to be his wife. Just what would become of Ella in the meantime she had not figured out. She hated her, but wished her well in anything that did not interfere with her own selfish plans. And so she planned, and schemed, and waited.

John Horton and Laura conversed long and earnestly that day, and when the girl left the room they had a very fair understanding with each other. Laura was satisfied and happy, even though not a word of love for her had the young man spoken. That would come in time, come with the exercise of falsehood, of trickery, of deception, if in no other manner.

After the departure of the girl, Horton turned to his desk again and worked industriously over a huge pile of letters and papers until nearly midnight, then he closed his desk and put on his wraps softly down the great staircase, first removing his shoes in order that his feet might make no noise. At the door of the parlor, where the dead man lay, he paused and listened.

The door was slightly ajar and he could see that all was dark and still within save for the dim light of a lamp which stood on a small table near the place where the body lay. From across the hall came the sound of hushed voices, for the watchers were sitting in the morning room at the south side of the house, and were whispering bits of forboding and little scraps of gossip, as those who watch over the dead will at times.

What a strange whim it is that places the dead in the constant care of the living from the moment of death! Is it that the time the clods fall heavily upon the coffin box? Perhaps the word "care" does not express the meaning intended, but why is it that those who have lived solitary lives, never knowing the joy of human companionship, whose days and nights have been passed in broadcloth and linen, are left to the mutilating fire from the hearts of men, why should such as these be given the result of a watcher by the coffin-side when the longing heart has ceased to care for the companionship and kindness denied? Ah, mockery of it all!

Horton waited for an instant at the threshold, making certain that no one was in the room, then he softly closed the door open and stepped inside. His stockinged feet made no noise on the rich carpet, and he passed boldly to the long cabinet where the dead man had kept his private papers. The key was in the lock and he turned down out, and many of the drawers were still pastry open. The will was in the hands of William Horton's affairs, had not yet arrived, and no attention had apparently been paid to the private papers of the deceased. As the young man stood before the cabinet his shadow fell upon the floor, crossing the hall.

Silently he stooped to a crouching position on the floor, half-hidden by the heavy window drapery which swept the carpet at his feet, and waited. He could see one of the watchers coming to view the corpse, and in a moment the room was deserted again save for the grim figure there in the habiliments of the grave and the lurking figure there by the window.

When Horton, well knowing that he should not be disturbed again for at least an hour, proceeded to make a careful examination of the drawers and pigeon-holes of the cabinet. But the thing he sought was not among them. Presently Horton had made and executed a will the night of the murder, and in it Ella Horton and her child been carefully hidden away, or perhaps given into the custody of the lawyer himself.

Presently the searcher's hand struck the sharp corner of a bit of fancy work situated at the top of the desk, and on answering a spring the little door flew very small, and it took but a glance to satisfy the young man that he had found it.

As he stood looking blankly into the drawer a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he started as if caught red-handed in a terrible crime. But the soft voice whispered into his ear: "It is I, your friend, Laura."

"You!" he muttered, turning almost savagely upon the smiling girl.

Laura ignored both word and tone.

"You are disappointed?" she asked. Then, pointing to a slight projection at the bottom of the cabinet, she added:

"Look there!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Horton, still trembling at the thought of the discovery, even by this girl, of the purpose of his errand there.

For answer Laura stooped and pressed slightly upon the projection of the surface of the cabinet, which would ordinarily have escaped observation, and a small secret drawer came instantly into view. With a smile on her face she drew forth a paper which it contained and handed it to her companion. Horton turned paler than ever as he looked upon it, and when he came to understand fully all that it meant to him. It was the last testament of the farm hand drawn in Horton's favor!

But it had never been executed!

Horton pointed to the blank line where the dead man's signature should have been and covered face with one hand.

Laura gazed for a moment at the man she loved with pity, then her face changed to one of contempt.

"There is a way to destroy this," she said.

Horton regarded her blankly for a moment in the dim light.

"I don't understand," he said.

"You know how to write William Horton's name, do you not?" she said, as if witnesses are required. Listen! The forenoon before he died I was alone with him in the room. I saw you out there in the hall, and called you in. Together we had him sign his name there, and then we two witnessed the document, not knowing what it contained. Do you understand?"

"But this is forgery that you are proposing," gasped Horton.

"Come," was the imperious reply, "we must not be seen together here. Come with me and bring the paper with you. After the burial it must be found, executed in due form, in this secret drawer."

Like one walking in a dream, Horton thrust the paper into his pocket and stealthily followed the young lady out of the room and up the wide old staircase. Ah! the letter hidden in his desk would be useful now! As he reached the landing above he turned sharply about, thinking he heard a slight noise in the room he had left behind. But no one was in sight. Only the heavy door which he had thought secretly closed swinging slowly on its hinges!

"I thought I closed it," he muttered. "It must be the wind."

Eight passed slowly, and the golden glory of a June sunrise flooded all the sky, and brought light and music and many glad things to a waiting and undeserving world! And the old house was crowded with neighbors and acquaintances from a distance, and the burial took place in the little church yard at Cloverdale, where the dead man's wife had slept in peace for many years. And the old lawyer came up from the city, after the old English fashion, and read the last paper of the deceased, but no will, he declared, had been executed.

Then John Horton, pale and trembling, and opened the secret drawer in the cabinet in the—and, his countenance a large envelope, addressed, apparently in William Horton's handwriting, to the lawyer. Opened, it disclosed the will the lawyer had drawn up one dark night two months before, properly signed and witnessed, the date of execution being the very day of his death. It gave everything the old man possessed unconditionally to "his beloved nephew, John Horton." The witnesses were John Horton and Laura Canton. The lawyer smiled grimly as his eye fell upon the document. He read it aloud, slowly, carefully, in a harsh, unsympathetic voice, and John Horton had to be listened, while the disinherited girl looked on unmoved and with a smile on her lips!

Horton was mad when it was over, the reading of the paper which seemingly placed him in the position of power which he had coveted so long, but he did not like the look on the lawyer's face as he laid the paper aside and turned toward him. Could it be possible that he suspected? Had the forgery been executed with proper care? Ah, the path of sin is not a flowery one, and John Horton was beginning to realize the fact!

There was silence in the room for a moment, and then Horton advanced to where his cousin sat in the deepest shadow and turned sawy without a word, and without pausing to see the latter before the lawyer, who was looking on with a slight frown on his face.

The lawyer's gaze was unresponsive, and Horton relaxed to his sweetly confidential, who stood at one of the long windows, looking idly down upon the handsome lawn with in her dainty costume of black. She greeted the young man with a smile and turned her eyes to the window, but Horton came up from the city, after the old English fashion, and read the paper aloud, the document, but no will, he declared, had been executed.

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SLOCUM CURES
CONSUMPTION AND WEAK LUNGS.

THE PROOF

Lungs and Throat Healed.

MAGGIE S. BOSWELL, Enterprise, Ga., says:

"I feel as though I can describe what I suffered day and night from weak lungs. For many, many times, day and night, I nearly suffocated, my throat being in a raw, sore condition from inflammation and weakness.

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A SINNER AT BAY.

The Story of Lucky Markham's Nemesis --- A Romance of Love, Crime and Retribution.

By T. C. HARBOUGH.

Author of "The Man in Gray," "The King's Spy," Etc.

Begun in No. 48, November 25. Subscriptions can begin with that date, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from this office.

CHAPTER IX.

NINON AND LUCY BLAIR.

When Quincy Markham reached the city he did not find Captain Velvet waiting for him as before. He went straight to his office followed by the woman who had watched him during his journey, and when she saw him beyond the portals of the building she drew off with a satisfied smile.

She might have followed him to the private room, where he had discussed subjects in which millions were not involved; but she seemed content with what she had done and when she came to a halt it was in the house occupied by Lucy Blair.

The watcher was Lucy Blair herself. The woman who had told her conspiration, Sarah, the strange and startling history of her life and the terrible crime in which it was connected had gone up to River View had had come down, watching Markham with the eyes of a hawk.

As she threw off her shawl Sarah came into the room and asked how she felt.

"A little better for my rest," said Lucy. "I wanted Sarah back, you know, as I knew of no other way to get it than by going after it. Has any one called for me?"

"A young lady came this morning shortly after you went out."

"And was she like?" eagerly asked the woman.

"I could not see much of her face; she tried to keep it concealed, I thought."

"She was young, you say?"

"And well-bred. I can tell well-bred people no matter how much they try to make you believe they are not."

"Did she leave any word for me—none at all?"

She seemed disappointed at not finding you at home," answered Sarah. "She intimated that she would come again and—"

"Left no name or address, I suppose?—"

"Nothing at all. Intended to call on me for both, but she went away so sudden that I didn't get the chance."

Lucy Blair looked perplexed. It was evident that she had received an important caller, but she put up with it with good grace.

"I hope she will call again," she said as she left the room for her apartment up stairs.

"She's at the door now," cried Sarah, when Lucy had reached the top of the stairs. "I know that rap."

Lucy Blair turned back and made a gesture to Sarah which kept her from the door which she opened herself.

The form of a woman glided into the house and stopped in the hallway when the southern woman asked:

"I would like to see Mrs. Blair, if she is in" said the stranger, whose face was but partially visible under the thin veil she wore. "I was here this morning."

"I am Mrs. Blair," interrupted Lucy, "and I beg your pardon for being absent during your previous call. I came in but a moment ago, and Sarah told me some one had called to see me."

The caller threw back her veil as she leaned forward and Lucy Blair looked into the face of a beautiful young girl whose eyes evinced a good deal of eagerness of purpose and a little fright.

"I got your letter. It came perhaps at the right time," said the woman's caller. "So you are Lucy Blair? Well, I am called Ninon Markham."

At mention of the millionaire's name Lucy started a little and then led the way to the parlor across the hall.

"I did not intend to drive you from home; I assure you that such was not the intention of my letter," began Lucy. "I merely wanted to let you know that you would find a friend in me some time."

"But I am here now," said Ninon. "I will never go back to that accursed house!"

"Why accursed, girl?"

"I dare not tell you. There are things one had best keep secret. It is best for others, you know."

"Perhaps," and Lucy Blair's eyes sudden-ly grew fierce, "I know so much that I wish I had never seen the light of day," continued Ninon, her words coming faster as her excitement increased. "I have within the last few hours made the startling discovery the secret which the world would give much to know. And I am but a girl—"

Ninon Markham trembled and Lucy tenderly put her arm around her waist and drew gently to her.

"Poor child! We all have our troubles and the world is full of them. I want to probe into the secrets you carry. We all have our skeletons and few closets are there which have none. But you are tired. Let us have time to make some visits."

"No, no!" cried Ninon. "I am not tired. After quitting the place I got some rest unexpectedly and am quite myself this morning. You offered me not only your friendship, but a home. What have you done this? I never heard of you until I received your letter. Something, however, told me to take you at your word, and following it came an incident which gave me the opportunity to meet a man I person. If you have secrets which I should not know don't let me worry them from you. I do not repeat that I have never heard of Lucy Blair before."

"You never heard your—Quincy Markham—speak of me?" eagerly inquired Lucy.

"Never."

"Did you ever hear him mention Condon Powers?"

Ninon gave a quick start and looked searchingly into the woman's face.

"Condon Powers! Is that the name that personage, too?" she exclaimed. "I knew that my father knew him. He says he is dead—but he lies. I have seen a man who called himself Condon Powers and that within the past few days.

"Let me say, Miss Ninon, that Condon Powers is dead, so I care not what may have happened at River View and elsewhere. You are now a fugitive; you have left the world. You will remain so for two years. You will be hunted; they will set the keen detectives of the city upon your trail. Quincy Markham is not the man to have you up with him unless I am not mistaken, he had planned for a wedding at River View."

"That is true—a wedding in which there was no love on either side," exclaimed Ninon. "I was a prisoner and knew that that would follow such a match that I turned my face from River View in the dead hour of night and fled from the man that my heart was elsewhere, and that I am the betrothed of one who my parent has rejected. I will never become the wife of Goodwin Sands, sport, gambler and libertine. He has riches and is 'chummy' with my father; but I am old enough to say to them I care to entrust my future happiness and the love of a life time."

"You are right, Ninon. We will see how Mr. Sands' wooing progresses now that you have escaped from the fowler's snare and left the hawks behind."

Lucy Blair spoke with a good deal of spirit and her eyes seemed to flash fire with a strange and intense light.

"Make this your home," she said, suddenly to Ninon. "They will hardly look for you here, for they won't connect me with your flight. If they should, why, we'll outwit them. I realize that Quincy Markham has riches and can place all the sleuths of the city on your trail; but we can double on the hounds and beat them in the end!"

"You're a strange woman and I am at a loss to understand why you should take such an interest in me," replied Ninon.

"This is the first time we have ever met—"

"Let us call it the first time," was the interruption. "I have told you that I have a few secrets, like other women," and the speaker smiled.

"Is Markham the father?"

"That is not the word, child," said Lucy, softly. "I don't want to hear it. I have been knocked about the world so much since childhood that I want to be at peace with all. I have learned hard lessons in the school of adversity, lessons which I hope I may never forget. I am a woman of a day of vengeance. You believe that, don't you, miss?"

"I hardly understand you, but I believe in sisterly love."

"That's it, that's it! Ultimate justice! That's the term," cried Lucy Blair. "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind all the grist. There, you must have some tea. I will make it. Come out of it myself," and she darted from the room leaving Ninon to wonder if her like a person in a maze of mystery.

CHAPTER X.

THE LOSING HAND.

For once in his career at least Captain Ted Velvet was at fault. He had told Markham that he had spotted the man and the latter had left the box from the library at River View, and perhaps he had, and that the man had returned the identical box with its contents apparently undisturbed and the millionaire had no thinking of the man he had hurried from the cliffs into the waters, wondered how the box had come into his hands.

Had the man killed in the library an accomplice to whom he had entrusted the box with its gruesome contents; or, after all, had he taken the life of the wrong man?

He was not a little puzzled when he settled down to a thorough study of the case, and mystery only deepened the more he thought of it, and, aside from the disappearance of Ninon, it troubled him a great deal.

Then the captain's mind would came fresh to him and he resolved to find her, cost what it might.

He thought she might be in hiding somewhere in the city, but he could not think to whom she would go for concealment. It was more than half believed that a young man named Paul Wetherell, who had figured in his mind he resolved to interview him.

Parke Wetherell was not hard to find, and Markham, soon after his last interview with Velvet, was not surprised that person in a down town cafe.

He did not want a scene; that was the last of her desires for myself; he wanted to sound the young man in a quiet way and when they met Markham was as meek as a lamb.

Wetherell, who was a handsome fellow of meager means, but the pink of honor, greeted the millionaire cordially and saw him take a seat at his table. It was not an uncommon for Markham to patronize the smaller cafes and Wetherell took it for granted, of course, that he had happened in in a casual way, for the place was famous for its grills.

"How do you find times now?" began Markham.

"Oh, so, so," was the answer. "Fact is, there isn't much going in business just now."

Wetherell was the junior member of a law firm of which his uncle was the head and he smiled when he spoke.

"Times are dull all around. I trust they will pick up by and by."

"I thought they were rather good 'on the street,'" said the young attorney. "I heard that the clerks were making money right times up a little in your world, Mr. Markham."

"It did for a time, but they have dropped back into the same old rut. See, here, Mr. Wetherell would you be disposed to do my office when you've finished your dinner?"

"Not at all. Shall be glad to do so."

"Then my office where none could hear he would have a talk with the young Wetherell, and that was what he wanted.

Markham finished his meal and Teddy Wetherell good day and took his departure.

Two minutes later he sat in his office like a spider at the door of his web. He questioned the young Wetherell, wondering if the young fellow would be true to him and keep aloof. He was quite alone, for he had dismissed the clerk for the day, something unusual, and quietly waited for.

In a short time the door opened and in walked Parke Wetherell. He had gone to his lodgings and changed his suit and now looked as spick and span as a nabob's heir.

Markham waived his visitor to a chair and the two engaged in earnest talk.

"I want to talk to you on important private matter, Mr. Wetherell," said he. "You will pardon my directness. I am your fiancee's father and—"

"I am not going to talk about the coming marriage which seems to be distasteful to you, Mr. Markham," was the quick reply, acrimony. "The interview therefore will be brief. I do not know where my daughter is."

The bluntness of this question seemed to strike Wetherell in the face like a blow-gun. He half-rose from his chair, but immediately sank down again.

"If Miss Markham is missing you certainly come to the wrong person for information," coolly said Wetherell.

"I have no reason to doubt your statement. You have aspired to her hand and I suppose this is not news to me. You have filled the girl's head with queer notions, and I have felt it incumbent upon me to interfere. You know that, for she has told you."

"I know that you have assumed to choose a husband for her and she has acquiesced."

"She did so outwardly, but you have not withdrawn from the lists."

"If I have not, sir, it was because Ninon loves me."

A frown crossed Markham's face.

"The girl vanished last night, after leav-

STILL A MYSTERY.

Prof. S. A. Weltmer, Through the New Science, Weltmerism, Continues to Startle the World by His Astounding Cures.

LEARN A PROFESSION THAT BRINGS A GOLDEN HARVEST.

The miseries of disease have been transformed into the joys of health by the new science that is known as it is effectively applied by Prof. S. A. Weltmer, as it takes its name, and by the graduates of the school which is known as the Weltmer School of Magnetic Healing, of Nevada, Mo. Prof. Weltmer, as he takes the name, is a native of Nevada, Mo., where he has been engaged in the practice of his profession for many years. He has been located at his present home in Nevada for the past five years, and during that time has built up a practice that has become phenomenal in its extent and results. Prof. Weltmer has been located in the past two years in his present commodious quarters, and has treated in the past two years in his present commodious quarters, and has treated in the past two years in his present commodious quarters, and has treated

ing an insulting note behind, not directly for me but for Marie, the maid, knowing full well that the maid, loyal as she is to my interests, would acquaint me with the contents of the note which she promptly did. Now, sir, I see at the bottom of this greenless act of Nixon's the subtle hand of Mr. Parke Wetherell."

"I must pay tribute to your remarkable discernment," responded the young lawyer, sarcastically. "You know more than I about Miss Nixon's disappearance. For I know nothing at all."

"Mere assertion again!" sneered the millionaire.

Wetherell rose quickly and looked down upon the man in the chair. His blood was hot. That his honor had been impugned by Quincy Markham was more than he could bear. He seemed to waver for an instant, but he remained as cool as a Greek.

"This interview terminates right here," he said, "I know nothing, absolutely nothing, of Nixon's whereabouts. She did not see fit to consult me about her abrupt departure. I am not her attorney, though I do not disclaim the fact that I love her. You invited me to this place for the purpose of charging me with an act which is the shadow of a crime. You have cut and dried Miss Markham. You seem to have no further use for me."

With this Wetherell picked up his hat and laid his hand on the knob.

"The door is locked!" exclaimed Markham, "You locked it unintentionally when you came in."

The millionaire's face was livid with rage and his voice grew sharp and shrill.

Wetherell had simply penned himself up in the room. He could see the smile in front of him was gloating over his success. The young lawyer was well built and somewhat of an athlete, but Markham did not forget this. He leaned back in the chair and waited for Wetherell to proceed, inwardly congratulating himself that in a few moments he would secure complete victory.

"You will open the door!" calmly said Wetherell, as he looked again at Markham. "Since I have locked it you will open it or I shall let myself out in a summary manner."

"When, pray?"

"Now!"

Wetherell stepped aside and seemed to brace himself for a plunge at the portal.

Markham saw him gather himself up and and he knew that the door, stout as it was, would yield to the young man's assault.

"By heavens! you don't get out till I say the word!" suddenly cried Markham, as he sprang up. "Conspirator! I want you to tell me where the runaway is. When you have done so the door opens, not before!"

"I'll throw you through it, first!" almost roared Wetherell, as he leaped at Markham and seized him by the shoulders. "This is your office, I know; but you can't cage me here and play out the infamous hand you had. Open the door, open it at once, or, by the gods, through it you go head foremost!"

Markham felt the hands of Wetherell sink into his shoulders; he saw that he was dealing with a man stronger than his antagonists in the library at River View, and he frothed at the mouth as he was dragged bodily toward the door.

"I'll crush you if you don't let me out!" cried Wetherell. "By George! I'll leave you dead in your own guilty den if you don't obey me!"

Markham saw that the game was up. He had failed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PREY OF THE WATERS.

The result of the interview between Quincy Markham and Parke Wetherell was that the latter walked from the millionaire's private office victorious. He had thrown the man sharp at his own game and had obtained a deeper insight into his character than ever before. He had also learned that he no longer called River View her home and he was much concerned to know what had become of the fair fugitive.

He did not care how Markham felt over their late talk; he only regretted that he had not left the rascal on the floor unconscious from a blow of his sturdy fist, and once he thought of turning back and administering the chastisement.

"We'll meet again," were the words with which Markham dismissed. "Then I will have a chance to give him a taste of what I have in store for the impudent scoundrel. Nixon would never have left his house without cause and I shall devote myself to finding that cause and learning the truth. Of course Markham would not tell me the truth. He would have a specious story of his own; but never mind. We'll stand face to face again, Quincy Markham, and it may not be on ground of your own choosing, either."

The millionaire about whom the toils were slowly but surely gathering, could have looked back into the lamp heat and have stood below the cliffs that overlooked the river at River View he might have witnessed a scene not at all to his liking.

We will go back and witness it, for a witness it should have, and the struggles of a strong man for life are always interesting.

Markham did not tarry long on the bluffs after he had relieved himself of the gruesome burden he had carried from the balcony after the battle there.

He was satisfied that he had seen his enemy sink like a stone and the waves had closed over him with widening circles that gently touched the shore.

A closer inspection of the results of the struggle might have revealed the fact that the man he carried through the shrubbery and down the river path still breathed, but faintly. As the would-be murderer advanced he thought of nothing but his victory and that the waters would cover the man he carried across the meadow.

But fate had willed it otherwise. The body not downward like a falling rocket and vanished underneath the cool waters, and Markham turned away triumphant.

But not for long was the body lost to view. The few stars that peeped from behind the ragged masses of clouds saw something come to the surface and show signs of life. The sudden baptism seemed to bring the dead back to life; a hand moved above the water, then a white face appeared, and ere long a man was battling half unconscious for his very existence.

Some time elapsed before the victim of the millionaire's passion made much headway. The water got into the man's throat

"You don't lose that, I hope."

and nearly strangled him. He sank once, but manfully came to the surface again. He seemed resolved that the crime of the night should not be consummated in the river.

By and by his efforts became more pronounced and he gained new strength. He puffed for shore and at last reached the bank. There he sank down exhausted and the night birds screamed above him and the waters rolled down to the bay.

Not a word had escaped his lips during the battle for life in the waves. He seemed glad enough to have reached the shore without wasting his breath in self congratulation or words of encouragement.

When he had recovered somewhat he crept along the shelving shore, now and then wringing the water from his garments and feeling his throat bruised by the mad fingers of the drowning. The scientific air as he moved his hands over the abraded surface as if he recurred to the fierce battle in the library. When he had scaled the cliffs he came down the road and passed above the tide, he turned his face toward the mansion and for a moment looked as if he wished to go back there and have it out over again.

But he did not do so. Instead he adjusted his garments as best he could and glided toward the little station. Among the shadows of the trees he watched like a criminal fleeing from justice, and the first train that came along he boarded and hid himself in the darkest corner of the forward coach.

The run to the city did not last long.

When he alighted from the train he slipped away unobserved and threaded the maze of lighted street, taking good care as before to keep in the shadows.

The waning hours of the night found the man at home. He had entered a small room and looked about, as if he had expected to see some one there.

The place had no tenant, however, and he drew from a secret place in the apartment a false beard which he adjusted to his face. A few other changes made him look like another person, and, as the day was breaking, he sallied forth.

The waters had given up their prey and the man who had battled with Markham was again at large.

The sun was coming up over the bay when this man touched the arm of another person whom he encountered on the street, and the two men slipped down an alley and entered a dingy eating house where they found a table.

"You were not at home when I came in?" said Markham's victim to his companion.

"No," said the other, turning his face away, "I was out and I've been touched."

Markham's enemy laughed.

"You've been touched?" he echoed, the brute still on his face. "I would like to know who would spend any time on you?"

"That's the mystery, I don't know."

"What did the light-fingered fellow get?"

"Nothing but the little box you left with me for safe keeping."

The nabob's foe nearly started from his chair.

"You didn't lose that, I hope?" he exclaimed.

"I lost nothing else. It was this way——"

"Well, never mind that, Butler. It didn't contain much but a few pieces of Condon Powers' bones, had Markham was keeping them for relics and proofs. They told him that Condon Powers perished in the old jail at Houston when it was burned. He keeps, too, the old newspapers which gave an account of the fire and how Condon Powers escaped the noose years ago."

"Well, if you don't consider the box and its contents of much value I'm glad, but, you see, I feared you would nearly go up over my loss. I know I shouldn't have had the box on my person, but I feared that some sneak thief might enter the house during my absence, and so I took it along when I went out."

"It's all right, I say. Don't let the loss trouble you. We'll not long without it."

"By Jove! I'm glad of that!"

"It nearly lost more than the box last night," grinned the man with the false beard. "I had the fight of my life, we've within an hour. You don't know what hands that money bag has. I half believe they were behind my wind-pipe."

"You met him, then?"

"Yes, and he nearded me!"

The listener laughed and looked strangely at his companion.

"That is, he thinks he did. It wasn't his fault that he failed. But let us eat. I'm as hungry as a wolf that has been starved on the barrens for a month."

The victim of the millionaire and the river fell to and maintained a strict silence while he devoured the food which had been placed before him.

His companion, a man younger than himself and rather well looking, every now and then looked across the table and watched the eater, saying nothing. For some minutes the elder ate and at last rose from the table.

"What now?" ventured his friend.

"Time will tell. Events shall chase themselves with lightning like rapidity," was the response, as he looked at Butler. You heard that, eh? The vengeance which has waited all these years shall be no longer delayed. I've seen her."

"His daughter?"

"Yes, yes, that's what he calls her. I've stood face to face with the girl. I could hardly restrain myself, but I beat back my feelings and talked calmly to her. She is no longer entirely in the dark. But, come with me, You're through, eh? Vengeance belongs to me!"

Butler followed the strange man to the street like a slave.

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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CHAPTER IX.

KISMET.

Overhead a calm sky, bending above the helpless victim. The still grandeur of the lonely spot, with its immensity of space, and the awful horror of desolation that encompassed it, had its effect upon the sufferer suspended between earth and sky. His heart was filled with a realization of the wonderful power of God, and low under his breath once more he prayed:

"God help me!"

How still it was! Surely God could hear his prayer! Oh, if He would only answer it and send relief! But—how could that be possible? No one knew where he was—no one would ever think of such a dreadful situation. Yet Rex Davenport remembered words that he had read somewhere: "Nothing is impossible to God."

His reeling giddiness at his heart throbbed until he could hear its pulsations. His eyes were dim, but all the time they were the living, moving, terrible horrors below. Only a few moments more to live. In less than an hour he would be lying cold and cold at the bottom of the gorge below—pierced with the arrows of hungry beasts, cut from life and hope—gone from the world where there was,or seemed to be, no God, no hope—good forsaken, and no one but Zoba would ever know his fate. It was a ghastly, a horrible thought, and as the thought was, Rex Davenport's heart quailed before this—the most terrible situation of his life. Only a few moments now, and he would reach bottom. Already he fancied he could feel the sharp stings, as a hundred poisonous fangs would settle at once upon his body.

"Well, thank heaven, my death will be instantaneous!" he thought. And then—then there in the very face of death, an awful, horrible sight, Rex Davenport awoke to the knowledge that he loved Marigold Ainsworth, loved her deeply and fondly, as he had never loved any one before in his life.

"My darling!" he murmured, softly, "here in the face of death I realize the truths that I love her! And if it were God's will that my life should be saved, I would let that life at her feet. I would dedicate my future to making her happy. Forgive me," he added, bitterly, "I fear there is none for me! My moments are numbered!"

The slow horror of the death—prolonged to the utmost limit—seemed the excess of torture, the most exquisite torment. Long shilis ran over his body, his pallid face was convulsed with suffering, and he writhed agitated to midnight darkness, his breath came in labored gasps. His fingers were clenched, the poor bound hands could strike no blow for freedom. Even were he to get his unbound hands, he could be do to his own defense, down in that den of death—the most terrible of dangers. Should he touch the ground, hundreds of fangs would fasten in his flesh, and he would be dead in a few moments. He could see the horrible, beady eyes, the pointed heads, the forked tongues, the sharp teeth—all about him. No; there was no hope—none! He closed his eyes once more and gave himself up to lost. Stop! What is that? Is his sense playing him, and is his brain gone astray? To his astonishment, the rope has suddenly ceased to unroll; his body hangs and half lifeless over the pit with its leaping, squirming occupants; then, ere he can realize the truth, he sees the once the rope begins to wind up again, slowly—haltingly, with a cry of joy, which falters into "My God! I thank Thee!" Rex Davenport realizes that some one is turning the windlass above, and that he is slowly, but surely, ascending from that horrible pit out of the very jaws of death.

Was there ever such a rescue before? What man could ever bear enough to death, an awful, unheard-of death—to "feel its fog in his face," and then be saved? Rex's servants in limbo, his eyes close helplessly, and when at last he arises from the awful death trap into the pure air of the mountains with the evening sunset lighting the western sky, he is quite unconscious.

His body falls limp and lifeless upon the grass, and with a low cry, Madge Winter falls on her knees beside him.

"Is he dead?" she murmurs; "oh, is he dead? No—no—thank God! I felt him breathe a little. Oh, Rex! Rex! If you had perished I would have died, too!"

She was utterly exhausted by her superhuman efforts in turning the windlass. No weak woman could ever have succeeded in such a task, only through the strength and energy born of a mighty love. Yet, the man whose life she had saved had sunk into unconsciousness with another woman's name upon his lips, another woman's image in his heart. Alas! it was the oft repeated lesson of loving:

"This is the way of it, wide world over.
One is beloved, and one is the lover.
One gives and the other receives.
One invites and the other believes.
One offers a smile for a life's devotion,
One hopes and the other believes.
One lies awake in the night to weep,
And the other drifts off in a sweet, sound sleep.

"One soul is aflame with a Godlike passion,
One plays with love in kitten-fashion.
One speaks and his eyes say more,
One sobs 'I love you,' and wet eyes show it;
And one laughs lightly and says, 'I know it,'
Then runs to tell the other's tears.
One lives for the other, and nothing beside,
And one cares for you, would it wake."

Madge recovered from her momentary weakness, and began to chafe the young man's wrists and try to restore him.

"Rex! Rex!" she cried, when at last she found the dark, beautiful face bending over his own, "oh, thank God! You live! You live!"

"Madge!" he exclaimed frantically, "you have done all—all! You have saved me from that awful fate!"

She bowed her head and the tears rolled down. She was terribly agitated, though her heart was glad that he was safe.

"Rex," she said, "I cannot realize it yet—oh, thank Him that I saw you when you did. She knew that to undo him and follow you at a little distance, for you looked so pale and weak that I feared you would fall over a very long walk. I knew it would seem bold and out of place for me to intrude upon you, but I trembled painfully, but I decided to risk your displeasure rather than something should tell me that you were in danger of some sort. So I ventured to follow you, but after a time I lost sight of you, and I sat down to rest for a time. All at once I saw the Indians, the savage Indians, hurrying by, and he looked like a fiend. I felt at once that he must see you, and I crept on, and there upon your life again. I started up and began to shout for you, I found the windlass and bending down, could see you suspended over the chasm. Then all, until you were almost below trying to get at you. Oh, Mr. Davenport!" her night form shaking with emotion, "I thought I should die the first impulse was to try and save you, but the windlass was too large for me. Further, impossible for me even to turn it. Long before I could have got you home with my unassisted aid, your body would be at the bottom of the snakes' den, and you would be torn to pieces by the reptiles. I felt I must save you alone and unaided. I made the attempt, and God was very good and merciful and so—you are here."

He took the little form, pallid, all bleeding and blistered from their hard task, in his own and kissed them, murmuring:

"God bless this little Madger!" he said, reverently, "twice you have saved me from death, Madge, and I—I am going home with and remember this: henceforth, you are in my care. I shall go home with me to my mother. I intended that, from the first —but now, I can promise you a home with her and me as you wish it. I shall probably marry some day—and leave the home nest, and then you will go with me. But I am sure she will welcome you, and you will be safe with her. Madge, will you come, Madge?"

Her shy eyes drooped, and the blood surged into her cheeks.

"If you want me," she said, softly. "Are you thinking of Miss Achilles, Rex?" she added, a trifle abruptly.

He looked at her, flushed with confusion, the mobile lips seemed partly decided to smile, then to remain grave. Madge gave him a look, how looked, how serious, and so very much in earnest. She must feel quite an interest in his movements, presumably, he said to himself. For handsome Rex Davenport was a conceited man, and this young, half wild mountain girl had any other feeling for him than a kindly sentiment and natural concern in his welfare, thrown as they had been together, under such unusual circumstances. He was not a ladies' man, but was kind and courteous toward all women, and he possessed to be thus and at the same time infuse into one's manner something which impresses the other sex with the conviction that this man is not to be trifled with.

"I really do not know, Madge," he said, at last, suddenly arousing himself from the absorption which had come upon him. "In fact, I do not think that I shall ever marry. I am not engaged to any one."

His glance met her's accidentally as he spoke, and something in the swift light that kindled within her eyes made his heart start with a sudden bound. Then he smiled. There was but one song in his heart, and that was set to the sweet music of one name—Marigold.

"My darling!" he thought, "there is no one like her!"

And yet—and—yet—there was something in the darkly beautiful face of the girl at his side, deeper, and sweeter, and fairer than mere beauty, which touched his heart, and appealed to all that was best and noblest, brightest and purest in his nature. It was not likely that he would ever forget Madge Winter.

All at once the girl arose to her feet and going over to the windlass, began to turn it again, so that the rope would descend into the snakes' den, and they first fastened a large stone to it, which she rolled to the edge of the pit.

"That devil shall believe that you are lying down there," she said, turning to Rex with a dazzling smile. "Oh, how can any human creature be so wicked?"

He shuddered. His escape from an awful death had been too recent and he was too weak to be able to look upon it lightly.

"Now," said Madge, when at last the rope was all paid out, and hung at the bottom of the pit, with the horrible reptiles hanging furiously upon it, "now, let us try and get back. Do you think you can possibly walk back to Dudley, Mr. Rex?"

"I must. Yes, I think I can manage it. Come, if you are ready, I am."

They started off together, Rex walking slowly, as he found that he was compelled to lean upon Madge for support. Many times during the long walk back to Dudley did Rex Davenport feel like giving way, but Madge encouraged him with hopeful words, and by him along so carefully that at last, soon after nightfall, they found the hotel comfortably lighted and there safe once more in the hotel.

"We will remain here until the morning train!" announced Rex; "you will be ready, Madge, shall you not?"

Rex Marigold had hastened to meet him, alarmed at his long absence, and when she saw Rex, pale, weak, with dark shadows, so pale and feeble, she had been terribly frightened, but Rex told the story as rapidly and concisely as possible.

"Ready? Why, of course. We have no preparations to make," returned Madge. "And I have made up my mind to go wherever you do, Rex. Madge shall accompany me—if she will."

Rex looked into the girl's eyes.

"How good you all are to me!" she said, softly. "I would lay down my life for you both."

"But we do not wish you to do that!" cried Madge. "We want you to live and be happy."

Madge observed the use of the plural and knew that Marigold connected herself with Rex Davenport's movements at least. The girl's sweet face grew pale, and she turned slowly away.

"Miss Ainsworth," Rex Davenport," said Marigold, gently, "Madge and I will leave you to rest. You must be tired, and will be ready to leave on the first train to-morrow."

So it was all settled. The train would arrive at 8 o'clock, and Rex Davenport determined to go at once. The sooner they reached home, and the jewels were placed in the hands of the express company, the sooner would he feel relieved.

In the night fell over the land, a, tithe, and Rex Davenport, with Madge and the neighboring forest in the vicinity of the snake pit. It was but his first day since the fall in the grey twilight. He crept like a serpent to the edge of the pit, and peered down.

"Ah, Mr. Rex Davenport!" he said, in a low hiss, "you are dead and out of the way for good and all, with all your wealth. You should never have crossed Zoba's path, for he is swift to avenge, and when he strikes, he strikes to kill. This is not well to oppose fate. What is to be—will be. Ha, ha! Rex Davenport is gone! Zoba, Tonight he strikes the final blow, and to-morrow I shall be rich in the rajah's jewels. With the sahib safe at the bottom of the snakes' pit, the way is easy before me. No power can stay me from the safe which holds the treasure. He has boys to carry out my plans, and under the silence of the night shall cover all things with a thick cloak of darkness. We will steal to the place where the jewels are hidden away, and then they will be in my hands. And then—for my native land and happiness forever. What is to be will be!"

CHAPTER X.

TRAPPED.

Weak and exhausted though he was, Rex went at once to the landlord, and announced his intention of removing from the hotel to the express company.

"I have decided to ship it at once by express," he said to himself. "I feel that it will be safer in the hands of the express company. I have had a narrow escape with regard my life, has threatened to rob the safe tonight, so you may as well be on the safe side."

When the safe was opened Rex concluded to remove the jewels himself, to bring and place it in a strong tin box for shipment. Madge and Marigold accompanied him, the treasure was safely stored in the express office—a primitive looking building, as was the hotel.

Rex left the traveling bag in the safe, having first weighted it with a stone for Zoba's delectation. This accomplished, Rex began to tell his companions.

Late that night, a swift gliding figure stole from the hotel carrying a traveling bag which he placed in the safe with a triumph and the snaky eyes glittered like fire.

"At last!" muttered the East Indian, "at last the rajah's jewels are poor Zoba's at last!"

He stole away like some evil thing through the night. Just below the window of the room occupied by Rex Davenport, the East Indian paused involuntarily and glanced upward. It happened that Rex had awakened, and, leaving his bed, had lighted a candle and going to the window—moved, by some impulse—glanced forth.

Zoba's eyes fell upon the pale face of the young man framed in by the sash and revealed distinctly in the flickering candle

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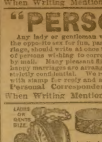

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light. The bag fell from Zeba's hand to the ground.

"It is his wraith!" he whispered, in an awestricken voice; "his wraith returns to guard the jewels. But he shall not have them—living or dead—he shall never have them. They are Zeba's—poor Zeba—who has tried so hard to gain possession of them."

Shivering like one with an ague, the cold perspiration standing upon his brow, Zeba hurried away. He had miles to walk before he could put into execution his design of starting for India.

Rex returned to his bed, and slept undisturbed until morning, awaking much refreshed.

The train would leave at an early hour and Alan Harvey was going east with them.

Rex found Marigold in the sitting room of the hotel, looking very fair and sweet in her neat traveling dress, which she had renovated and rearranged during her stay at the hotel, until it looked like new. She looked like a fair little flower—a drooping Easter lily—standing at the window. Rex went straight up to her and laid his hand upon hers.

"Marigold!" he said, eagerly, his face flushing with a tender glow, "my own Marigold! I come to tell you how much——"

He did not finish. Somehow the words faltered into silence upon his lips. Turning, involuntarily, he saw Madge standing in the doorway. Her face was very pale and there was a strange, sad look in her deep, dark eyes.

"The train is coming, Mr. Harvey says," was all she said.

Rex started hastily, and his hand dropped from Marigold's shoulder.

"We are ready," he made answer, "and Madge, you will for once in your life rise early morning, for I am told that Bill Bunting will be free today."

Madge smiled and a little tremor ran over her.

"Oh, no, no, I hope not!" she faltered. "Oh, I am so afraid of that man!"

Rex smiled uneasy, Madge," he said, "you will soon be far away from his reach."

But Madge had already been troubled upon the girl's face, and she shrank nervously from every sound, startled and afraid. She had faith in Bill Bunting's power to accomplish his will, and fear that she would never be free from his influence.

But, at last, they were off. The train steamed easily away with Rex and Madge tried hard to overcome her terror. Rex and Alan Harvey made the journey as pleasant as possible for the two girls and Madge began to have a little of the nervous terror that had held her in thrall.

Although they did not know it, an unsuspected occurrence had taken place. Bill Bunting had been released the night before their departure, had learned their intentions, and on the train which bore the party swiftly eastward, the station agent was also hidden away waiting to come forth, like a tiger from its lair, to spring upon his unsuspecting victims.

At a small way station in the very heart of the wilderness the train came to a stop for a short time. A shock-headed boy came on board, carrying a basket of withered looking apples. He made his way straight to where Marigold and Madge were sitting. Alan Harvey and Rex were nowhere to be seen. The boy glanced swiftly into Madge's face.

"Say, miss," he said, in a husky whisper; "that's a nice lookin' outside at this station. Somebody's attacted the gent as was with you, and he's got it cut up kind awful. I mean the chap as is named Davenport. You see, miss, he's purty well known 'long this line. He is feelin' t'ell for, out yonder—hurt bad. And he's a-askin' for ye—that's if your name happens to be Miss Madge."

"Yes, yes, that is my name," Madge started up, white. "Marigold!" turning to her companion, who was looking idly out of the car window.

But the boy laid a grimy hand upon her arm.

"Scuse me, miss, but Mr. Davenport said not to let the other lady know. He wants you. He's most out o' his senses."

Without a moment's hesitation, Madge hastened from the train, following the young doctor unchallenged. When she had reached the ground, the boy led her away to a secluded spot behind a huge pile of lumber.

"Where is he?" she demanded.

But just then a rumbling sound fell upon her ears like a knell, and the train steamed away from the station. And as it went Madge caught sight of Rex and Alan standing in the door of the smoker, chatting unconcernedly away. She knew then that she had fallen into some fiendish trap.

With a cry she darted off in the direction the train had taken. But she had not gone many yards when strong hands seized her, and a rough voice—a too well remembered voice—spoke her name.

"Madge! hear now. You can't possibly catch that train. It's gone and your fine chaps Harvey and Rex won't never see 'em again."

With a cry of horror Madge turned upon Bill Bunting like a fury, her eyes full of terror, her slight form trembling.

"How dare you?" she gasped, breathlessly, "how dare you follow me and play such a cruel trick upon me? My friends are on that train; and I am here alone and penniless. Help away from me, Bill Bunting, or I will kill you!"

"Bah! What a lot of silly stuff! Now, see here, Madge. Your friends, as you call them, are tired of you, and they knew you were going to be left here. It's all right. They only meant to give you a little lark, and then send you back to me."

"You are telling a lie, and you know it!" cried Madge, "and I am not going back with you. There are other people in the world, and here at this little station I will appeal to some kind person to take care of me and to send word to Mr. Davenport. I know where he lives in Philadelphia. He gave me his card and even if I were to lose it, I know the address by heart and could find the place easily. Stand back, Bill Bunting; don't dare to touch me!"

She flew past him like a bird and reached the small building which served as depot and telegraph office. Once inside she darted into the private office. The operator glanced up.

"Pardon me," faltered the girl. "I am afraid of that man outside and have come here for safety. Will you send a message for me immediately?"

"Where?"

"To the next station east to Mr. Rex Davenport. Do you know him?" As a look of intelligence flashed over his face.

"Yes, miss, everybody knows Rex along this line. Well, I will send it right off. C. Q. D."

"If you please. I have no money. Here, let me write it."

She seized a blank and wrote these words:

"Was detained forcibly by Bill Bunting. Help me!

MADGE."

"All right," said the operator, "it shall go now, and he will have it directly. In the meantime, you can sit here in my office and no one shall disturb you. Do not fear."

"You are very good," said Madge, "and I thank you."

She seated herself and listened while the message was ticked away upon the wires, and her heart grew gradually stronger and braver. In the meantime, Bill had been watching everywhere for her. He could hear him in the outer office and he seemed in very angry conversation. She knew that he would leave no stone unturned to find her. Presently, however, the message was sent, and Bill did not suspect that the girl for whom he was seeking was just the other side of the thin partition where he was not sought her like a madman.

After a time the operator's little daughter brought her father some lunch. He wrote a few hasty lines on a slip and chatted with the child some again. She soon reappeared with a basket for Madge, of which the poor girl thankfully partook.

"You had better stay here," the operator told her. "I received a telegram from Rex if I could, but there is danger of that man seeing you. He will soon have an answer to your message to Mr. Davenport, so try and be patient."

Late in the day, no answer having arrived, the operator, whose name was Clark, called to the depot agent, and Madge was inquired if Rex Davenport had received his message and was coming after her.

"Davenport has not arrived. No news of him or his party. Mysterious."

CHAPTER XI.

A STARTLING OCCURRENCE.

Poor Madge's heart sank in her breast, and an awful feeling of desolation crept over her. Marigold, Alan Harvey and Rex, whom she considered her only friends in the world? They had left her behind for the next station; where were they now? Was she left alone, to fall into the hands of her enemy, Bill Bunting, or to be taken to Granny Bunting's den? And once there would Marigold be safe from the hated marriage. The thought was more bitter than death. Rather than that she would leave the shelter of the private office but with Bunting's cruel eyes about to fall upon her and she would be lost.

The day wore away, but still no news from Rex Davenport. It was late in the night or nine hours' ride from Dudley—and the surroundings were wild and picturesque.

But Madge Winter took no pleasure in the scenery. To her there was only one spot in the wide world, the place where Rex Davenport was; and she was afraid to look out in a corner of the office in the only comfortable chair which it contained. Finally Clark very heartily insisted upon her occupying the chair, and she had not the mind the problem which weighed it down. What would become of her? She was afraid—afraid. She began to lose hope of Rex Davenport's allegiance, for how would she ever reach him? Her young life had never seemed so lonely, so utterly forsaken and desolate. Never had there been a glimpse of Eden, which a heart-weary mortal gains, seemed all the drearier. It is shut out of it forever, with no hope of gaining his desire. A tantalizing apple of forgetfulness and despair which the fainting traveler at last discovers to be a mirage.

If only Bill Bunting would leave, Madge felt that she could endure anything, but he would never go, unless compelled to, without her. She knew his bulldog pertinacity so well. Her father had left the world not remain in the telegraph office all night, beside, the operator had been so kind as her would end his duties for the day when night came, and Madge felt sure that all his substitute would equal him in kindness. In fact, Mr. Clark—who knew Jacobs, the alphabet—had told Madge that he must not remain in his hands. Yet how to get from the station without Bill Bunting's presence he did not know. Somehow, he believed every one was afraid of Bunting, as Bunting was not altogether unknown to fame throughout the country. But, after all, this was rather a pretty girl into the ruffian's hands would be aiding and abetting crime. Clark was a married man, father, and he would not lend himself to such a deed.

"Miss Madge," he said, kindly, as the hands of the clock pointed to six, "I will not the operator's wife and you—well, you simply cannot stay here in the office with Jacobs. You will have to go home with me for the night, and by tomorrow you will surely hear from your friends. If you do not, however, I will see if I cannot raise the money to pay your way to Philadelphia. Once there you might go to Rex Davenport's mother, and I think she will help you. I will do that for you—if you don't mind. I will get up a scheme to raise the money, even if I have to beg it in Philadelphia."

"How good you are!" cried Madge, her eyes full on tears.

"Nonsense! I have a little one of my own—the nearest little girl I know; you saw her when she brought the lunch. Well, now, don't you think I would like other people to do as much for my Marie, if she were thrown into a position like yours? Uncommon hard for a girl like you, I should say. Well, now, Miss Madge, if you are ready we may as well start. My home isn't far away; you will only have to keep your eyes open for a sight of old Bunting. Watch! As sure as you live, he is out there on the platform. I don't know whether he thinks you have been here all day or not, but at all events you and I have got to cut and run. We will take the back way out, and trust to heaven he will not recognize you."

They stole from the back door of the station, and ran down the road some distance before Bill Bunting's eyes fell upon the pair. But Clark had proved wary. He had found an old coat in the office which Madge quickly donned, and with the black sailor hat that Marigold had given her, she looked at a distance in the falling twilight not unlike a boy. At last Bill Bunting, eagerly straining his bleared eyes for a sight of Madge in graceful persons, never thought of connecting the missing girl with the dusty little figure walking lightly away from the station, at the side of the operator.

Once at the log house where Clark made his home, he turned the girl over to his wife, a cheery, bright-faced woman, whose good temper even the privations of her isolated, backwoods life could not spoil. She took Madge to her own room and after a hearty supper made her a bed upon the floor. Madge, after a refreshing bath, was soon sleeping sweetly.

Next day Clark left home. He was going to the saloon to see if I can raise money enough to send that poor girl east."

He entered the law-defined, dirty den which flourished in the title of saloon, and where mere bad whisky was consumed every night than seemed possible, considering the small crowd patronizing it. A number of rough-looking men were sitting and standing about the room, drinking and discussing the last bear hunt. Some were playing cards and throwing dice. All represented the lower strata. As Clark entered the ill-lighted, ill-smelling place, there was a sudden hush. Every face was turned and glanced to mingle in such society. He went straight up to the bar-keeper, a hideous looking fellows were filling what appeared to be a tall glass. Throwing himself down into a wooden arm chair, proceeded to order drinks for the crowd. It was unusual for Clark to do such a thing that conversation was immediately suspended, and a momentary silence settled down upon the room.

"Gentlemen," said Clark, arising and leaning negligently against the bar, "I do not often give a treat, but you will excuse me tonight I have an errand—an object. A friendless child has been thrown upon my hands, and I am a poor man, and unable to contribute a large sum toward assisting her on her way. Therefore I come by night to appeal to you, knowing your big hearts and generous impulses. Gentlemen, this child must be cared for, and restored to its friends; it must! And I am sure that the kind-hearted citizens of Dudley will not turn deaf ears to my appeal. A small subscription list is now going the rounds. I hand the list with five dollars. Who will follow my example?"

Dead silence for a time, as the astounding proposition penetrated the thick, dull brains of these gentlemen. Then a big six-footer, a typical mountaineer, all beard and hair, lumbered forward, shuffled and went to Clark's side.

"Here, mister," thrusting a huge hand into a deep pocket and resurrecting a ten-dollar bill from its depths, "count me in."

"And here's five for mine!" cried another man, and shortly the amazed Clark held a neat roll of bills amounting to a little over one hundred dollars, in his hand. He was overwhelmed.

"Thank you, gentlemen, thank you, a thousand times!" he cried. "I shall never regret your generosity, I am sure!"

Whereupon he left the astonished the man who had contributed the ten-dollar bill; "let's see the kid; eh, pards?"

"You be shot for a fool!"

"Safe and sound asleep," answered Clark. He did not think it necessary to tell that he wanted them to think that she was a child. Beside, Bill Bunting might get wind of her whereabouts. As a thought of Bill Bunting crossed his mind, he felt, at once, he observed a shuffling figure in the background—making its way slowly forward, and Clark's face turned a little pale as he recognized—Bunting himself!

Further chapters of this highly interesting story will appear next week. Readers are requested to refer to the following free premiums on pages thirties and fifteen.

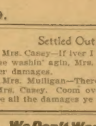
The individual who is too busy to listen to the woes of his neighbors misses a job lot of trouble.

Settled Out of Court.

Mrs. Casey—If iver I catch your goat afin' me washin' agin, Mrs. Mulligan, I'll sue ye for damages.

Mrs. Mulligan—There's no nade of suin', Mrs. Casey. Coom over here an' I'll give ye all the damages ye want an' more too.

We Don't Want Your Money



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"Chicago, Satan's Sanctum," paints in picturesque and vigorous English the inside facts of Chicago's vice—facts that are only hinted at or are hidden by the public press. Tells how and why all this evil exists, and how the police and city officials get rich by allowing crime and shame to exist. Gives a better idea than could be had in six months' life among the slums, at great danger to your own life and at enormous expense. Astounding revelations for people that do not even guess the extent and forces of sin in a great city. We have many applications for agencies for this remarkable book, but insist on placing it only among a few of the best. We will give a few of the right kind of agents an exceptional opportunity to make large money. If you are a hustler, address at once, C. D. Phillips & Co., Publishers, Chicago, Ill.

Her Glorious Claim.

"Well," said the theatrical manager, "what particular reason have you for believing that I ought to back you as a star? What have you done to attract public attention?"

"It isn't what I have done," the beautiful actress replied; "it is what I have not done that will give you an opportunity to advertise me. I claim to be the only member of our noble profession who has not gone into bankruptcy with liabilities of over $7,000 and nothing but 20 cents' worth of clothes as assets."

A Classical Nurse.

"Mehetibel," said a Boston mother to the nurse, "did I not see a policeman pushing Revere's ambulator while ago?"

"Yes, ma'am, but I was merely acting upon Emerson's advice."

"Emerson? What does Emerson say which is at all applicable to such a case?"

"He told us to hitch our wagons to a star."

Averting a Crisis.

"Conspuez l'ame!" shriek the people, and the accused trembles.

But stay!

The janitor of the Palais de Justice strides into the tribune!

"What's the matter with the cuspidore?" he thunders, in a terrible voice.

The people are thoroughly cowed, and the crisis, for the moment, does not impend.

Swiftness of the Sound.

"I forgot how fast it is that sound travels," said the man who is always discovering something that everybody else knows, "but it is marvelously swift pace."

"I dunno," answered the friend who yawns, "it always seems to me to depend a good deal on how you stand with the operator at the telephone exchange."

Strategy.

"Why is it that Westlyke never has to wait when he calls up anybody by telephone?"

"Because if he isn't attended to right away he begins to call the operator girl at the central office his dear girl, and say sweet things to her, and she's afraid somebody may be listening."

Meets Them Everywhere.

Tired Treadwell—Dis is a werry small world, after all.

Sauntering Sim—Wot makes you t'ink so?

Tired Treadwell—Hardly a day goes by but what I meet somebody I've panhandled in some other state.

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I have discovered a positive cure for all female diseases and the piles. I never fail to cure any of the various diseases peculiar to women, such as leucorrhea, displacements, ulceration, granulations, etc., or the piles from any cause or either sex. I will gladly mail a box of this wonderful medicine free to every sufferer. Mrs. C. J. Hilton, Box 198, Kokomo, Ind.

Not Heart-Hungry.

"Are you one of the heart-hungry women of whom the poet talks?" asked the soulful young man.

"No," replied Mrs. Parvenu, with a decided shake of her head. "I can't say that I am. My preference is for liver and bacon."

Small Want.

Lady of the House—Go on away from here. We have no old clothes, no cold victuals, no——

Hopeless Henderson—I didn't want nothin' to eat nor wear. I jist called to see if you had a old automobile to give away.

Place to Look for It.

Hoax—Bjones seems to be greatly interested in golf. I see him going over the course every day.

Joax—Oh, he's only looking for a lost dog. Some butcher told him he might find it in the links.

Touching.

"What," asked the sentimental young woman, "was the most touching incident you ever witnessed?"

And, after some thought, Senator Sorghum answered with emphasis:

"An election."

Do You Want Employment?

We want a good manager in each county to look after the advertising and the sales of the best wheel saddle seller in the market. Address Hutchison Supply Company, 124 West Main Street, Kalamazoo, Mich.

In After Years.

Old Beau—Ah, Miss Clara, I love you. May I hope to some day call you my wife?

Miss Clara—Have you spoken to my mother on the subject?

Old Beau—Why—er—yes, I believe I did—some twenty-odd years ago.

THE RESCUE OF HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

1. Mrs. Henpeck's Mamma—Oh, deary, the boat upset, and but for this kind man I would have been drowned. I brought him home that you might suitably reward him.

2. Mr. Henpeck—Come out, dear fellow, and I'll——

3. ——reward you!

Important to Young Writers.

Your story or verse may have been rejected for purely technical reasons, or because it lacked merit. We have formed an association, the members of which are entitled to examination and editing of their writings by men of 20 years successful literary experience, who will also tell you the periodicals that will accept your work. Half of the rejections of stories and verse are due to ignorance of technical matters, or not sending your MSS. to the right publications. On receipt of $1 you will be entitled to the service of this association, and if we do not place you in a way to make money from your work we will refund you your dollar. Our editors are regular magazine contributors; one won a $3,500 prize award. Successful men are those that can point the way to success. Writers' Experience Association, 1215 Boyce Building, Chicago, Ill.

Illustrious Precedent.

"That was a pleasing afterthought of yours," remarked the old preacher who had listened to a sermon by one of his youngest brethren, "when you drew upon the analogies of nature to prove the immortality of the soul."

"An afterthought?" said the younger clergyman, in some perplexity.

"Yes. You thought of it about 2,400 years after Socrates."

One of Our Readers Making Money Fast—She Started Without Capital.

DEAR EDITOR—I have just started in business and believe I am doing very well for a beginner who had almost nothing to start on, as the first month I made $147.80 clear, while last month the profits more than doubled, being $326.50. I attribute my success to having such a good household article as the Iron City Dish Washer to sell, as it is the best and cheapest one I ever saw or heard of. It will wash and dry all the dishes for a large family in two or three minutes without wetting the hands. People are tired of the Washer for an hour around and come or send for one, so that now I have no canvassing to do. I don't see why every lady or gentleman cannot make $5 to $10 a day right from the start, as the machine sells itself; everyone wants one as soon as they see it work. Before Iron City Business College, 421 Station A, Pittsburg, started me in business and they are going to start many non-selling whose home is in Iowa. They will send anyone full particulars who wants assistance in starting in business.

Yours truly, Mrs. A. L. W.——

Further Cultivation Required.

"Our Conversational club has a new scheme to improve its members in the art of conversation."

"What's that?"

"Why, we have taken adjoining boxes at the opera for the season."

At the Minstrels.

Tambo—Why will the next secretary of the navy serve a short term?

Bones—I don't know. Why?

Tambo—Because he won't be Secretary Long.

Tremendous discord from the orchestra.

PERSONAL.—Any lady or gentleman wishing to correspond with the opposite sex for fun, pastime, improvement or marriage, should write at once to us. We have a large list of persons wishing to correspond. We introduce you by mail. Many pleasant flirtations, warm friends and happy marriages are arranged through us. Everything strictly confidential. We refer to this paper. Address with stamp for reply and membership blanks. Personal Correspondence Club, Box 182, Chicago, Ill.

More Stories.

Mrs. Muggins—Your house has three stories, hasn't it?

Mrs. Buggins—That depends. When Mr. Buggins comes home very late there are more stories than I would care to enumerate.

The Trouble.

"So our friend is going to leave politics?"

"He is," answered Senator Sorghum, "if he knows what's good for him."

"It is too bad to lose him. He was such an accomplished wire puller."

"Yes; but he got hold of a live wire."

This Is no Dream.

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its fragrance on the desert air;
Full many a girl has made an old man green
By showering kisses on another girl as fair.

Considered a Booby.

"I guess he married her after he had been jilted by several others. He didn't want to give up without winning one wife."

"What a silly thing she was. I wouldn't serve as any man's consolation prize."

The Cheerful Idiot.

"When melancholy marks a man for her own," asked the smart boarder, "how does she mark him?"

"Colors him blue, of course," replied the Cheerful Idiot, in scorn.

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Saving.

Mrs. B.—You know well enough how I scrimp and save. I never have things the way I did before I married you.

Mr. B.—I've noticed that my dear. Why, you don't even have a birthday any more.

Artful Courage.

Miss Sourface—I'm sure Mr. Dash was intoxicated when he called last evening. Why, he actually tried to kiss me.

Miss Gabby—Yes, they say drink nerves men to desperate deeds.

He Took Up the Glove.

Father—You kissed my daughter then! I saw you.

Young Man—Well, if your man forgot your blinders I can't help it.

STORYETTES.

A Bargain in Burglary.

The great actress sat in her boudoir looking over a scrap book filled with press notices when her maid entered and announced a visitor.

"He's a tough-looking feller," said the maid, "but he says you sent for him, an' he won't believe me when I tell him you're out."

"Show him in," said her mistress, curtly, and a few seconds later the caller was admitted.

"You are Mr. William Swipes, the famous burglar, are you not?" inquired the star.

"My name is Bill Swipes all right enough," admitted that worthy, "but as fer bein' a burglar—I have been accused of it, mum, but I ain't never been convicted."

"So much the better," was the reply. "I want you to do a little job for me."

"Hully gee!" exclaimed the burglar in astonishment. "Are you a crook, too?"

"Oh, dear, no! I want you to rob me!"

"Say, lady, wot's de game? Are youse a detective?"

"No, no. Don't be alarmed. I am an actress. I want you to steal my diamonds."

"Wot for?"

"To get my name in the papers, of course. In our profession, you know, it is absolutely necessary to keep one's name before the public continually."

"It ain't that way in my business," interrupted the burglar.

"Of course not. But that has nothing to do with the question. I want you to break in here tomorrow night and take my diamonds. The job must be done very carefully so that no one will suspect that it is a fake. The newspapers are so suspicious nowadays that it is almost impossible to get them to print anything about the profession unless they are paid regular advertising rates. Do you understand what I want?"

"Sure I understand. I swipes de sparks, an' youse pays me fer de job."

"Oh, certainly, I'll pay you well. You may keep the diamonds."

"T'anks, lady," replied the burglar, with a knowing wink, "but I ain't got no use fer stage joolry. Tell yer whot I'll do, dough. Gimme me a couple o' tickets to de teayter an' de price of a drink, an' I'll close de deal."

There Was Sorrow There.

The colonel halted his horse in front of a Dakota dugout and uttered a vigorous "Hello!" and after a minute a tow-headed girl about 16 years of age showed up and looked him over and said:

"Now, then, what ye whoopin' fur and who be ye?"

"Can I get anything to eat here?"

"Not a thing."

"Any water for my horse?"

"The spring's gone dry."

"How far is it to the river?"

"Dunno."

"Please ask your father to step out."

"Pop's bin on a drunk for a week."

"And your mother?"

"She's got the toothache. That's her crying."

"Haven't you got a brother?"

"Yep, but he got snake-bit yesterday and don't feel well."

"Well, what about you?" persisted the colonel. "You seem to be all right."

"Oh, but I ain't," she replied, as she made ready to disappear. "I was to git married yesterday, but my feller got shot by an Injun, and it'll take two weeks to ketch on to another. This ar' a house of sorrow, sir, and you will please to ride on and not ask any more fool questions."

CANDOR.

Mr. Gotrocks—I am worth a cool million. Do you think you could love me?
Miss Highflyer—Oh, dear, dear Mr. Gotrocks, I'll just love you to death!

Aggravating the Offense.

"You are charged, young man," the magistrate said, not unkindly, "with scaring the complainant witness nearly out his senses by putting him through some mock ceremony of initiation. I can make allowance for exuberance of spirits among college students, but sometimes this exuberance is carried too far."

"It was this way, your honor," exclaimed the youth who appeared to be the spokesman. "We were out for a little lark, and we caught a jay."

"The fine will be $2 and costs each," said his honor, his face hardening.

When Hope Spring Eternal.

Hiram—There's quite a change come over ol' Abner lately. He used ter be one of these here cynics; believed everything was goin' ter the dogs. He was allers lookin' on the dark side of everything. Now, he says the coutnry's all right, hain't no chaos ner revolution comin' an' the Philippine war's a just one.

Silas—Yes, his orchard got ter bearin' this year fer the fust time. He's got four barrels of hard cider in his cellar this minute.

Didn't Suit Her.

Mrs. Neighbors—I understand your cook has given you notice. What's the trouble?

Mrs. Suburban—I don't know, but I think she doesn't like my cooking.

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BEWARE OF STRANGERS.

The Ledger employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions. Every person representing this paper is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for The Ledger except he has with him a certificate of agency signed by the publishers. Any person who has been appointed agent to sell this paper, and who is not in possession of such a certificate, will confer a favor by reporting the fact to us. Also, if any one has been swindled in this manner, we will be glad to have him report the matter to us at once, as we are desirous of having the guilty party arrested.

When General Wheeler says he can see the end of the Filipino war he does not specify which end.

If the rule to eat oysters only in the months that contain an "r" holds good, why not adopt a rule to drink whiskey only in the months that have the same letter.

An Indiana man whose son was lynched went to law about it and recovered damages in the sum of $5. The stricken father may, however, console himself over the fact that a precedent has been established.

It can hardly be possible that Aguinaldo has been running in the direction all the time the paragraphers have been talking about him. He should have reached the jumping-off place long ago.

A New York woman starved to death a few days ago while trying to save an author. Most people find out before death overtakes them that they were not born to win fame with the pen.

Starting with Manila as a center, and striking a circle large enough to include China, Japan, British India, Australasia, Siam, Corea and the Dutch and French East Indies, Spain finds a population of 300,000,000 people—more than ten times the population of the United States. The chief ports of many of these countries are much farther from Manila than Havana is from New York. Into their markets are pouring a hundred millions dollars' worth of goods every month in the year, and the trade is rapidly increasing. American goods are more and more in demand. The commercial importance of the Pacific is just now dawning on the nations of the earth.

THE TITLE OF THE HOUSE.

Let us all learn charity, while also learning a little law. When held in the name of the admiral the house was subject to dower rights. Since deeded to the son by the gracious woman to whom the admiral lovingly gave it all, the house has had an indivisible Dewey title. This not only perfects the intent of the gift in the present but secures that intent for the future. The result is better than the case was before the incident began, which is now so happily closed. Out of the bitter has come sweet. Between the admiral and the people not a cloud remains. A woman's act has solved a problem and dissolved a difficulty. We begin to think that the admiral will find an even stronger place than he ever had before in the hearts of his countrymen. But he must henceforth equally divide the room of that place with his wife, for she has won it by her sensitive and gracious act of restoration.

THE GEM OF THE TRANSVAAL

OR FOR LOVE OF A BOER MAIDEN

by CAPTAIN ROBERT MAYNARD.

Begun in No. 46, November 11. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back numbers can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XI.

HAN'S ELEPHANT GUN.

As Dick fell he heard a voice near him shout:

"Wait, boys. He only stubbed his toe. Now, wait until he rises to run and then let him have it. Fire, boys, the making gun on him, an cut him down."

Dick had regained his self-possession and presence of mind this time.

He knew that to rise was to be riddled with bullets, to lie there was death or capture; so he began crawling along the ground, keeping close to the earth so that he might keep out of range of the rifles.

He had about thirty yards to go in order to reach some great bowlders, from behind which the Boers were pouring a steady fire into the ambushed enemy.

No man dared venture in the open space which was continually swept with bullets.

Dick was near enough to hear the orders of the English officers issuing commands to their men. They were cool and collected.

"Steady, steady, lads, train your guns on those rocks and be careful not to expose yourselves. They are using cover, the dirty dogs."

Once he raised his head and a dozen bullets whistled close to him, one penetrating his hat.

Down behind the grass and bushes, hugging the ground closely, he lay perfectly still for a moment.

"We got him," he heard a voice say.

"Then we'll go and see. It will be done for."

Dick crawled slowly and carefully toward the rocks from behind which the Boers were firing upon the British line.

The fight was hot. Dick often felt the whiz of the shots upon his face.

At last something from behind the rocks came soaring toward him, and one end of it struck him in the face.

He seized it with his hands. It was a rope, and one end of it was tied to some one behind the rocks.

The rope began to draw taut, and he grasped it with both hands. He was dragged over the ground, holding the end low, while the bullets whistled the hat shown his ears.

The distance between himself and the rocks grew shorter and shorter. He was drawn around the base of the natural breastwork and found Elmer and a dozen Boers, who had made a stand and were holding the position.

"By Jingo, Dick, we had to haul you in with a rope to keep you from getting killed. It's the sharpest scrimmage I've seen, and you are like one dazed. Have you waked up yet?"

"Yes."

"Then get to business. There's plenty of hot work here to do."

Dick fell into it his rifle all through the struggle and now joined his companions in returning the fire.

The Britions were driven back and the Boers, mounting their horses, rode down five miles away in a northeastern course, and encamped for the night.

The Boers were concentrating, however, and the British scouts sent out were driven back at every point.

Just at daylight the company was ordered into the saddle and they found themselves on prairies after a small squad of British cavalry.

The cavalry beat a retreat, exchanging shots with them, and one soldier fell from the saddle.

Dick galloped up to where the Briton lay on the ground, and looked down into the pale face upturned to the sky.

He was a young fellow not to exceed twenty, with a noble open countenance. His fresh young life had been given, not by his country, but for a syndicate of heartless millionaires who had brought on the struggle that they might further enrich themselves.

As Dick gazed on that dead soldier, he thought:

"Oh, Cecil Rhodes, could you look on the work your greed has wrought, could you but gaze on the pallid brow of this young man, would it really touch your heart, or is it invulnerable to sympathy? Would to God that Rhodes and Jameson were in the front of this fight! But, no, the curveres conceal themselves behind the covering of non-combatants, and the innocent patriots suffering the vain belief that it is for their country."

His company's bugler now sounded the recall and he galloped back to where they were forming. Two men were sent to bury the dead Briton and Dick's company was ordered southeast.

He had supposed at first that they were to join General Cronje in the siege of Mafeking, but from the line of the march which they took he supposed they were going to Glencoe, Laing's Nek, or perhaps the Boers had determined to make an assault on General White at Ladysmith. The latter seemed a little preposterous, for even the spunky Boers, but Dick did not comprehend the courage and determination of the Dutch of South Africa.

British forces scattered over the country were hastening to their commands as rapidly as they could. The attack had been so sudden, that they were wholly unprepared for it, and many scouting parties were still in the mountains.

There were innumerable skirmishes with them.

Almost every hour a party of Boers was coming within rifle range of a party of mounted Britons. Then shots were exchanged and often men were killed or wounded in the lonely mountain wilds.

Many poor fellows were left to die alone in the solitudes within hearing of the ravenous beasts, who only waited until life was extinct to rend them to pieces.

This was no fault of either combatants. There were no hospitals in either army, but the fate of war compelled them to move rapidly, and they often had no time to even take up a wounded companion.

On the second day's march Dick and Hans were sent to scout in front of the column on their west.

Hans was clung to his powerful elephant rifle, with which he could hit a buffalo half a mile away.

"Hans, war is terrible," said Dick.

"Ya-as." Hans responded, coolly filling his pipe. "You should den de dey find him on."

"If we should attack General White's army there will be some terrible fighting."

"I expect it," said Hans, coolly. "Dick Hans, whom nothing seemed to excite, continued to smoke.

Dick's eyes ran into a dark glen, which was surrounded by the wildest mountain scenery in the world.

Cliffs and crags were on every side. Hundreds of feet above them a wild goat watched them from his dizzy height.

Suddenly Hans cried:

"Dar vas vun!"

Dick turned his eyes to the edge of a cliff and, for a moment, saw a man in red coat with a carbine at his saddle bow. Then on a bay horse, sliding down at them.

"Hans, I believe he is alone," said Dick.

"Ya-as."

"We must duty to capture him."

"Ya-as, or shood him. I can bring him down mit my elephant gun."

"No, no, don't shoot, without giving him a chance for his life," said Dick, while the Indian whistled the hat shown his ears.

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"Ya-as."

"We must duty to capture him."

"Ya-as, or shood him. I can bring him down mit my elephant gun."

"No, no, don't shoot, without giving him a chance for his life," said Dick, while the Indian whistled the hat shown his ears.

"There are two paths to the place where this man rode down to one and I the other, so he cannot escape."

"Ya-as, dot vas all right."

"Do you see any other?"

"No."

Dick had a field glass with him which he leveled at the horseman.

"It is a Zulu negro," cried Dick.

Hans puffed a moment in silence and remarked:

"Vas dot so?"

"Yes."

"Be a Zulu scout who haf joined the British."

Further look at the man on horseback convinced Dick that the soldier on the cliff was right, although he was in the uniform of an English trooper.

No doubt he was a spy sent out to watch the movements of the Boers and report to Colonel Baden Powell at Mafeking.

It was absolutely important that we capture him, Hans, for he no doubt will carry valuable information to the commandant at Mafeking."

Hans took Dick's glass and gave the fellow a careful look.

"Zulu!" he exclaimed. "Dot fellow vill fight, Dick, like a demon."

"Well, it may be necessary to deal harshly with him, Hans," said Dick. "Let us ride down into the ravine and there lay our plans."

"Ya-as," returned Hans, still puffing at his pipe.

They rode down into the ravine and the bushes hid them from the view of the mounted man on the cliff, even if he had seen them.

"Hans, do you think he observed us?"

"No."

"You watched him closely?"

"Yes."

"I hope we will make him captive. Now let us separate, ride around the cliff, and come upon him."

"Very well."

"Which course will you take?"

"I dond care."

"Well, go to the right and I will take the left path. Be very careful for we will have to look sharp or we shall let him escape."

They separated and Dick, dashing down into the dry bed of a wooded stream, developed three-fourths of a mile to a place where the ground was sufficiently level for him to ascend the opposite slope.

A great spur of rock concealed him from the man on observation.

He urged Nightshade at a gallop up the steep path and soon gained a denser thicket.

The air was so light at that height that his horse was breathing hard.

He drew rein for a moment to let the animal rest, while he once more examined his gun and revolvers. He knew the power of these weapons, and could rely upon them at close or long range.

The American did not dare wait long, for he wanted to make the attack on the enemy's left at the same time his companion did on the right.

"These mountains are so irregular that distances are deceitful," he thought.

Nightshade recuperated rapidly, and the hill being less steep, he was able to go at a more rapid pace.

He was soon upon the plateau behind a cluster of bushes, which he knew concealed the Zulu spy.

Dick paused a moment and cocked his rifle, then with his arm ran through the bridle rein, rode forth toward the spot where the powerful Zulu sat on his horse.

Dick pushed carefully through the bushes and at last came in sight of the spy.

Clapping spurs, he dashed at him and cried:

"Surrender!"

The Zulu wheeled his horse about and drawing his sabre dashed at Dick.

"Crack went Dick's rifle, but the Zulu at this moment dropped to the right.

Crack! A second shot struck the black fellow's horse just as both animals collised.

The Zulu's horse was killed by the bullet, but Dick was seized by a giant clutch and found himself in a hand to hand struggle with the savage.

As he was whirled about in the struggle he chanced to glance across a wide chasm four hundred yards away, and saw Hans, who had dismounted and was cocking his elephant gun.

Dick had dropped his rifle, and tried in vain to draw his pistol.

He was thrown to the ground by the Zulu who set his foot on his chest and raised his sabre to strike off his head, when there came a loud report from the elephant gun, and the Zulu, bounding into the air, fell pierced through the brain.

CHAPTER XII.

ELMER VANCE AND FRANK.

For a moment Dick was so overcome that he could hardly raise his head.

Then he sat up and gazed on the black face of the Zulu, who lay within three feet of him, his head shattered by the great bullet which had crashed through it.

On the other side of the chasm stood Hans coolly reloading, while he awaited his antagonist's rifle.

Dick got upon his feet at last and shook himself to be assured he had no bones broken.

He saw Nightshade standing a short distance from the dead horse of the Zulu scout. He was sniffing at the air uneasily, and looking suspiciously toward his master, as though he knew Dick and his foe had come toward him, whinnying with delight, and evidently wished to be assured his master's shoulder.

"I am all right, old fellow, but I be handed if it wasn't a close call."

He leaped to the saddle and rode down to the bend where Hans was separated him from his friend Hans.

"We made a mistake," Dick declared to himself, "I supposed he would have no trouble reaching the place, but that chasm was not calculated upon."

The Boer came to the edge of the cliff and Dick shouted across to him.

"Go back to the place where we separated, I will meet you there."

Hans nodded.

"Do you see any more of their spies?"

"No."

"We will meet soon," and turning Nightshade about, he trotted down the slope to the point at which they separated.

Hans recalled him and was unconcerned as if he had been engaged in the most commonplace affair. He sat smoking his long pipe, and carried his elephant gun across the pommel of his saddle.

"Do you think there are any more spies in this part of the country?" he asked.

Hans, shaking his head, answered:

"No, I dond dink so. Dey all be lower down. We'll see some more, yet."

Hans was correct, for they had not gone five miles over the rough, stony road of the valley, when they came in sight of another Zulu scout, standing on a high crag, at a great distance from them.

He fired his rifle, but the ball went wide of the mark, there was no belief upon that it fluttered through the air as it went over their heads.

"Hans, we must not leave him behind."

"No."

"Can we make him prisoner?"

"No, it will be shood him," Hans said.

Dick doubted if it could be done at that great distance, but Hans coolly said from the saddle and aimed his elephant gun. Hans' gun carried a two-ounce ball, consequently a long, sharp steel bullet made to penetrate the tough hide of the elephant.

Standing on the rock, the Zulu was Indian and African hunter, gives an instance in which he sent a ball at a distance of five hundred yards completely through the body of an elephant, striking it just behind the shoulder and killing it instantly.

But Dick thought the distance too great even for one of Hans' powerful guns. The young Boer's eyes were keen, his nerves steady, and his demeanor cool. Moreover he had that confidence in himself which always inspires a good marksman.

Dick sat in the saddle against a horse so high as to form a breastwork he took a deliberate aim, and pressed the trigger. There was a stunning report like a small cannon, and Dick, who sat in saddle holding the horse of his companion, saw the Zulu spy suddenly stagger forward, drop his gun, and then sink to the earth.

"You hit him, Hans," said Dick.

"Ya-as, he vas dead now." Hans resumed, coolly reloading his rifle.

When this was done he remounted his horse and they took on leaving the motionless form lying upon the distant hill to be food for the vultures and mountain hyenas.

They saw no more spies or British soldiers that day and at evening joined their company and all went into camp. During the night small detachments of Boer scouts kept pouring into camp so that by morning they numbered several hundreds.

They moved on, traveling southwest by forced marches, with their forces increas-

ing all the time until they were one vast moving army.

Dick's company was in front most of the time.

One day they came upon a railroad and boarding several waiting trains, went thundering southeast, and soon were in the neighborhood of Dundee

This place was in possession of the enemy and the flag could be seen floating above the fort.

Dick's regiment went to the foothills on the north.

The English proved aggressive and showed a disposition to press the [illegible]

Every day small detachments of mounted Britons were sent out to reconnoiter. [illegible] were continually harrassing the Boers [illegible] were forming a cordon about the pla[illegible] throwing up entrenchments.

"They will get into trouble at th[illegible]" declared Elmer Davis, whose misc[illegible] black eyes flashed fire when a carbi[illegible] struck the spade with which he was [illegible] in a trench. "It is marvelou[illegible] range that a set of industrious men cannot pursue their calling without being continually annoyed by a lot of English dudes galloping about the coutnry and shooting at us for amusement."

"They are growing alarmed at our encroachment," said Dick.

"Yes, and well they ma[illegible] We are going to get a great deal near[illegible] than they imagine."

"I suppose so."

"We will have some hard fighting before we take Dundee. It is commanded by a veteran."

"Who?"

"General William Penn Symonds."

"William Penn and a fighter! Why don't William Penn raise up in his grave and bring suit against this game cock's parents for giving him such a peaceful name?"

"His parents are dead."

"Then he can take a change of venue to the next world. By jingo, Dick, I wouldn't be surprised if some of us don't join that invisible and unheard choir which sings around the great white throne. Now, I'm not an extra good performer myself, so I guess I will have to sit on the edge of a damp cloud and practice awhile before I can approach the gate."

"Elmer, how can you speak so lightly on such sacred subjects?"

"Oh, well, we had as well speak lightly as otherwise. If a fellow has to pass in his checks there is no need to whine about it a month ahead of time. He has just got to do it, and that is all there is of it."

They were seated under some sturdy oaks that grew beyond their entrenchment. Their horses were grazing on the grass just in their [illegible]

[illegible] at a gallop and dipped be[illegible] [illegible]t of sight just as a nine-pound [illegible]h the air over [illegible]

"Oh, the d—l, don't shoot and scare away the birds. Just wait until they get within our range and then we will make 'em see stars," cried Elmer.

The Boers were cool and apparently unconcerned at the approach of the enem[illegible] [illegible]y stood within easy range of the guns, smoking and talking in unexcited tones.

Hans was giving some extra care to his powerful elephant gun and sat near a tree smoking his pipe.

Suddenly from over the hill the company of cavalry burst in view. They were riding at full speed.

"The d—l, that's a charge!" cried Elmer, leaping to his feet.

With leveled carbines and the most appalling yells the Britons came at full tilt

Never rode the six hundred more daring in their wild charge.

The boom of a cannon rang out. The sharp, spiteful rattle of the Maxim guns sending shots flying among them.

Here and there a saddle was emptied or a horse went down. Every one expected every moment that they would stop, but on they dashed right at the Boers nearer and nearer. The bugle sounded, and every one sprang to arms

Up to within one hundred paces, and the firing grew so hot the British fell back save their captain, who galloped forward to within ten paces of the trenches and with his revolver shot Dick's captain dead.

"By thunder I'll have you for that," roared Elmer Davis, and he leaped upon a horse and dashed across the ditch and after the Briton, who had wheeled his steed about and was flying back to Dundee

Elmer, yelling, "I'll have you!" spurred in [illegible] It was a fearful race.

"Come back, come back!" cried Dick.

The bugle sounded the recall, but Elmer thundered on after the fleeing Briton though almost within their lines.

"Foolish boy, he is lost!" groaned Dick.

Another installment of this thrilling story of love and war will appear in next week's Ledger. The publishers offer subscribers some splendid premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen

Boy's Secret Society—Membership Free.

Any boy can join the C. M. A. free. It is the great original and only secret society for boys under 21 years of age. It has grips, signs, passwords, badges, secret [illegible] you are a member of certain [illegible] name and the names of several boys you think would like to join. Enclose stamp. Address THE STAR, 121 Marion Street, Oak Park, Ill.

A Market Special.

The college-educated feminine mind is not al[illegible]ination to master the myster[illegible] of the [illegible] governing the rise and fall of prices.

A [illegible] village maiden, of mature years, not [illegible] went to a store in England to buy [illegible] and was astonished to find that [illegible] to the Spanish Am[illegible] war [illegible] was rix."

"Get [illegible]" she indignantly exclaimed. "Don't tell me they fights by candle-light!"

The Day Before the Wake

Pat Now, min, phin yez see th' tree shtartin' to fall yank me up out av har-rm's way.

An Official.

Railway building is progressing rapidly in Mexico, but railway management there is still far below our more northern standard. An American who was one of a party of foreigners invited to take a trip over a certain Mexican line, tells this story in a New York exchange:

On the first day of the journey he was sitting on the rear platform of the observation car. The train stopped to take water, and as it was getting under way again a disreputable-looking man swung himself on the bumper and started to climb over the railing. He looked like a greasy cowpuncher, only more dirty and ragged, and the American tried to push him off. He held on, however, and began to yell in Spanish.

The American yelled back, and the two men scuffled and fought on the platform until another member of the party came out, and asked what was the trouble.

"I'm keeping this tramp from stealing a ride!" exclaimed the American.

"Nonsense," said his friend. "You're fighting with the brakeman."

The American vowed that he would never again judge from appearances, at least in Mexico

[illegible]

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A Chinese Hero.

Heroes are of all nations. A story told by Mr. Granville Sha[illegible] of Hongkong [illegible] the deed of a C[illegible] as good a right to the title [illegible]y man who ever stepped [illegible]

Mr. Sharp was on a steamer chartered [illegible] the French government to take troops and ammunition stores from Hongkong to Tou[illegible]on, the first French settlement in China

The captain had been ordered to make inquiries of the fishing boats in the bay respecting some Frenchmen who had been lost away. While pursuing his investigations he was unfortunate enough to run his steamer over a rock. To save her from total loss he beached h[illegible] two Chinese junks to take him an[illegible] to Hongkong.

The crew went in the [illegible] Mr. Sharp went with th[illegible] smaller one, which presently met with a terrible typhoon, lasting more than two days. Masts and bulwarks we[illegible] swept away and the rudder broken. The Chin[illegible] tain of the junk, together with his [illegible] believing that death was at hand, went below, got some opium, and became insensible

Fortunately three Chinese firemen, taken from the steamer, were on the junk. They had been fishermen and knew the coast. To these three men the junk was committed, and they handled it as best they could in such a storm. Three times the ru[illegible] was broken, and three times they repaire[illegible] Of the three men only one was able to steer well enough to save the damaged rudder. He had to keep a constant watch upon the waves, and be ready to ease off the wind [illegible] approached. With no one to relieve [illegible] this man stood at his task, the rain falling in streams without cessat[illegible]

For thirty-six hours the brave felow never once let go [illegible]. A boy stood b[illegible] and put food between his lips at int[illegible] to afford him strength to continue his [illegible] most hopeless task. He saved the junk.

[illegible] and [illegible] s of the [illegible]

Literature and Farming.

Farming was the first e[illegible] on the globe, and [illegible] is still the basis of all other occupations. This is a truth son[illegible] forgotten by people who think they [illegible] the world since their grandfathers [illegible] corn and potatoes

In a remote littl[illegible] southern settl[illegible] "literary" was hel[illegible] of mental stimulus [illegible] meeting had scarcel[illegible] when ol[illegible] and [illegible] with began a [illegible] on fodd[illegible] had fail to la[illegible] The schoolma'am, who had a wo[illegible] [illegible]lf about Longfellow [illegible] poets, grew restive. At le[illegible]

[illegible] corn raisin' and fodder pulling have to do with a literary meeting

"W[illegible] said Silas, "it's got jest this ter do with it [illegible] if it warn't fer corn 'n' cotton 'n' bacon 'n' greens, there wouldn't be [illegible] in the hull county, blame if there would."

Scoring the Deacon.

"There are odds in deacons," said Lowell, and the little dialogue printed below taken from the Ohio State Journal is illustrative of the dictum

"I didn't particularly like your pray[illegible] this morning," said a deacon to his minister

"What was wrong with it"

"Well, in the first place, it [illegible] and then it seemed to me that it [illegible] two or three expressions that were [illegible]ranted"

"I am ve[illegible] sorry that it met your d[illegible]approval, deacon," said the goo[illegible] but you must bear in mind that the p[illegible] not addressed to you."

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SECRETS OF A GRAVE.

The Story of Two Orphans and a Wicked Uncle's Plot---Revelations of an Indian Burying Ground.

By J. M. McNEILL,

Author of "Among the Counterfeiters" Etc.

(Copyrighted, 1899.)

CHAPTER I

ADAM SCOVILLE ALARMED.

Before the cottage under the hill a little girl was feeding the chickens. Aunt Sally Dent was looking out of the window watching her young charge with a quiet smile.

She seems happy enough," mused the old woman, "but when she is older and learns the truth she won't feel that right to'ards Kunnel Scoville. I'm thinkin' he has usurped the place John Dell's children ought ter occupy. But then——"

"Here, Lu! Feeding the chicks, eh? Where's Gale?"

The speaker halted before the cottage in the light buggy, attached to which was a pair of splendid bays.

Delia Danwell tossed the last kernel of corn to the scrambling chickens, and clasping her plump white arms over the rail, looked quickly up at the rider.

"Why, Uncle Adam, I——"

"Where's Gale? Can't I do it, uncle?"

"What's in a name? Uncle Adam?"

"I have a job for him."

"He would be glad of that if he was here. What is it? Can't I do it, uncle?"

Scoville with a smile into the earnest gray eyes of the girl. "It's a boy's work and the pay is good. I am anxious for you two to join me and I promised brother John that I'd look after his children, which I have been doing as your uncle, Delia."

A sudden flush entered the girl's cheeks and a sorrowful expression filled her eyes. Then the tears came and she sank to a seat on the low steps of the porch, casting the pail from her. Young as she was—only fourteen—Delia Danwell realized that the crew which her worldly uncle had taken of her brother and herself had not been such as a loving and considerate father would have appointed.

They had been turned out of the old home, and been given in charge of Aunt Sally Dent, a widow, who was dependent on the colonel for her home and board.

My wife don't like children," declared Uncle Adam, "and so, rather than have any trouble, I think it best that you and Delia live in the cottage and Gale work. I'll see that you don't want for anything till you can get a paying job."

These words were addressed to Gale, a boy of sixteen, small and rather timid for his age.

The children of the colonel's dead half-brother could not do otherwise than consent, since he was a lawyer and the manager of the property left by Mr. Dan—

Brother John came to want.

A rather hard look took possession of Delia's gray eyes at the pretended sympathy expressed by her uncle. Mrs. Danwell had been many years dead, and in consequence the father had endeavored to fill the place of both parents to his children. He had succeeded so well as to win their deepest affection when death claimed him also. Yet now, although a year old, still hurt deeply.

She didn't tell me where Gale has gone," suddenly spoke the portly colonel. "I suppose——"

"He's gone north!"

"North?"

"Yes, to the woods."

"And left you here alone!" A frown darkened the heavy sandy brows of Adam Scoville. "Does he expect to find work among the pines, Delia?"

"He'll have to if he stays long," declared the girl. "He didn't have much money when he went away. He can do better there than here anyhow. He and I both felt sure of that."

"Ah, is that so?"

"Yes, and when he gets a start he will send for me."

"Aren't you contented here, Delia?"

"No. This isn't my home. If I could live there, and papa was alive, I could be happy." A sob broke into the girl's voice and she sprang quickly up and hurried to enter the house.

"Wait a minute, Delia," quickly called her uncle. "Come out here and ride with me. I wish to talk with you." After a moment of hesitancy the girl consented. Soon they were being whirled rapidly down the country road. Adam Scoville chatty and pleasant to an unusual degree.

Delia could not help but say how rode along of the fine old mansion that had once been her home. Her step and his brother's wife ruled there now, and she and her brother were cast out in the cold.

"I think perhaps I can come to live with me," said the colonel, pursuing a certain advantage his quick relative.

"Oh!" cried Delia. "I do not care to [illegible]

"Why, I'm sorry, but you see I am [illegible] boys though [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

"Well," said he, "it seems that my estimate of old Scoville was a correct one, after all. None of the lads like him as well as they did the first boss—your father, miss. He has trouble most all the time about something or other. The boys came near going on a strike last week because they haven't had any pay in a month, and don't seem likely to get any.

"I am glad I met you, Miss Delia. Come with me now, and in the morning I will go with you to Brinkwater."

The girl followed her defender without hesitancy. She felt the utmost confidence in him from the outset.

"My mother lives up here a ways," said Brand as they walked along a dragon trail into the dark woods. "She come here to live because I find it pays better to work among the pines than among the farmers of southern Michigan. I was away two winters before she came and then she said she couldn't stand it to be away from her boy another day. I have a paying job here, by and am at home every night."

Thus the two exchanged confidences and were on the best of terms when they arrived at a small house half a mile from the railway station.

Mrs. Grayson was a pleasant woman of middle age, with a gentle manner and kindly speech. Regardless of her protests that she was not hungry the widow prepared a warm meal for the girl and made her sit by and eat.

Mrs. Grayson talked while Delia partook of the repast, assuring her that her son would find her in every way to find her brother.

"I have heard it said that Adam Scoville is a schemer," said the widow, "and I've no doubt he has no good intentions in seeking Gale."

"I'm sure he has not," declared Delia. "What I told uncle that Gale had gone to look upon papa's grave, he became excited; opened the door. On the step confronting her stood Adam Scoville.

CHAPTER III.
CROSS PURPOSES.

The girl's heart gave a sudden throb, then sank, but the next moment it she was surprised and dismayed at the sight of her uncle, he seemed no less startled on being confronted by his niece. A look of angry inquiry dawned on his hard face.

"You, Delia?" he exclaimed. "What in the world are you doing here?"

"I am visiting at present," replied the girl, trembling under his fierce gaze.

"Visiting!"

He laid his hand on her arm and gave it such a pressure Delia moaned with the pain.

"Oh, Uncle Adam, please don't, you hurt me!" she gasped, growing white and faint.

"Hurt you, is it?.. Well, that's what I meant to do," he gritted. "Tell me this minute why you run away from home!"

"I—I——"

"No falsehoods now. I know you sneaked away the moment my back was turned. Did you come up here, thinking to join your brother?"

"Yes," said Delia, "I did."

"Poor little fool! Didn't you know that I had come after him to fetch him home with me?" demanded the lumberman, angrily.

"I knew it, and that's why I ran away as you call it, Uncle Adam," said the girl, stepping backward, now that she was released from his grasp. "I knew you meant him some harm and I was going to warn him to keep out of your way."

Bold words these, and very imprudent perhaps, but the girl was too indignant to hold back the truth. Colonel Scoville regarded his niece with angry astonishment.

"Somebody's been slandering me to you, miss," he said, shortly. "I can tell you, however, that we have both come on a fool's errand; Gale isn't here."

"No, but he is at Brinkwater."

"Mistaken again, as I was. I have learned that your brother has gone to Wisconsin."

"Then what shall I do?" uttered Delia, with startled eyes and troubled face.

"That's easy answered. You will go home with me," said the lumberman, in a milder tone. "I have pressing business in the woods for a few days, however, and must needs send you back on the next train alone."

He stepped into the house and closed the door, leaving the girl to her own sad reflections. Delia, when she did, feeling very dejected and gone, if it was true as her uncle said, that Gale had gone to Wisconsin, the only thing remaining for her was to go home to her uncle's house and wait patiently until she heard from her wandering brother.

"I don't quite understand it," she said, after momentary reflection. "Gale said nothing to me about going to Wisconsin. He must have changed his mind very suddenly."

"That's exactly what he did do," declared the lumberman with a laugh. "Brand as a sailor who offered him a chance to make a stake on the other side, which he took up with, and left for Milwaukee."

Delia seemed satisfied with the explanation her uncle made, and agreed to return to Hilltop whenever he should say the word. Mrs. Grayson was called in. She knew the big lumberman who had taken the place so long filled by John Danwell, and although she had never been favorably impressed with him, she yet knew nothing against the character of the man, who, because of his vast monied interests, stood very high in the community.

"I would like right well to have your niece stay with me a spell," said the widow, "but, of course, you must judge about that, Mr. Scoville."

"She can stay if she likes till I am ready to go home," said he, "that is, providing she remains right here with you all the time."

"Agreed to that," Delia gladly answered. Colonel Scoville remained an hour chatting with Mrs. Grayson. He inquired after her son, and seemed pleased to learn that he had employment of a lucrative nature. When Scoville departed he exacted a promise from Delia to remain with the Graysons until he should see her again.

Brant came home about the middle of the afternoon.

"Yes," said he, when questioned, "I have been to Brinkwater, but I did not get your brother."

"I know that," said Delia.

"You know it?"

"Yes, for Gale has gone to Wisconsin."

"Whew! But that's news to me!" exclaimed the boy. "But why do you think your brother has crossed the lake?"

"Because Uncle Adam said so."

"With all due deference to your uncle, I am bound to say that such is not the fact," declared Brant, quickly. "I happen to know that Gale Danwell is in Michigan, and not far from Brinkwater, either."

Both Mrs. Grayson and Delia seemed surprised.

"If you have not seen Gale how can you be sure that he has not crossed the lake, Brant?" asked Delia, a perplexed look in her gray eyes.

"Easy as shooting, sis."

"Don't call me that!" urged the boy's mother.

"In the first place your brother arrived here only about noon yesterday. He hasn't had time to get to any lake port and ship to Wisconsin and for the news to get back here. Furthermore, I am in Scoville

A Sinner at Bay.

(Continued from page five.)

CHAPTER XII.

FACE TO FACE WITH JUSTICE.

Three days passed and Markham had no tidings from Nilnoe. He could not imagine what had become of the fair fugitive, and the efforts of Captain Velvet, the detective, whom he had consulted about her disappearance, had failed to find the slightest trace of her.

The pair did not connect Lucy Blair with Nilnoe in any manner. Velvet had failed to keep his promise to silence the determined woman, and Markham had not received the ring which would tell him that she was out of the way.

Perhaps it was the revolver which Lucy had thrust into the detective's face that alarmed that worthy; at any rate he had not called a second time at the house on his mission of silence, though he had sworn that he would best her yet.

It was the night of the third day when Maris, the maid at River View, heard a strange footstep in the hall and in another moment she was there.

Opening the door cautiously she peered into the semi-darkened place, but could see nothing. She was momentarily expecting Markham back from the city, but when he looked he was not there.

Was she mistaken? Had her ears deceived her?

She was about to call the butler and with him investigate the footsteps when she heard Markham outside and the next moment the millionaire was in the room.

Marie heard the rabbit pass into the library and shut the door behind him.

She thought for a moment that she would acquaint him with what she had seen—or really heard; but she changed her mind, as he might not care to be disturbed, and went away to her duties.

Markham was quite alone. He took a chair at the desk and began to rummage through some of its contents.

She could hear him now and then, once when he was at the steel safe, and again when she thought he went to the window and looked out.

If she could have peeped into the library she would have witnessed a strange sight.

The millionaire was burning papers.

Certain documents which he took from the safe he was destroying in the grate.

Document after document he threw into the fire until a heap of ashes proclaimed that his work was done.

"That's better," said the millionaire to himself. "I don't intend to let them get much after this night. Captain Velvet is a fool or a dolt, I don't know which. He's either lost his nerve or Lucy Blair has him under cow. I don't intend to take chances. I shall make the round of my property the next twenty-four hours and I will win. When I'm done Lucy Markham they will know it."

He looked up from his work and threw a quick glance toward the door.

It had opened sure enough and Lucy Blair stood before him!

The very coolness of the woman seemed to freeze Markham into speechlessness.

He half rose from his chair, but a wave of the thin hand made him resume it.

They stood face to face again. The woman had come to River View. Like the man he had thrown out of the river she had evaded his battle ground and now faced him under the chandelier of his own luxurious home.

For a moment neither spoke and then Markham exclaimed:

"Your coolness exceeds that of satan!" He leaned forward as he spoke.

"Call it what you like. I am here."

"I see you. Well, what is it?"

"I want to talk with you."

Markham was cool again.

"Go on," he said.

"Your hired man of nerve is not here now," continued the woman. "I am alone with you for the second time in years. I was alone with you one night in another state."

"Well?"

"I kept silent for your sake and your money when I was a child, but now—"

"You're after my money now, aren't you?"

"Yes, no. I want to warn you and I want money. I have a child; I've told you that. I want money to educate that child. She knows nothing of her mother's past. She does not know that I kept silent as the man stood in the shadow of the gallows; when you—"

"Hush! You needn't conclude that sentence. How much do you want?"

"I'll take five thousand now."

"And you'll leave the country?"

"No; I'll do nothing of the kind, not just yet."

"What will you do?"

"I'll stay right here in the north and see that my child is educated."

"And blackmail me again?"

"This is not blackmail, Quincy Markham. What have you been? What are you to-day? You are rich beyond calculation. You have the wealth of Midas. You revel in riches and are known as 'Lucky' Markham. I've often thought how well that name suits you. What if the truth had come out years ago? What if the court had known the truth? What if I had assisted my life, opened my mouth?"

Markham looked a little nervous.

"Woman, you're worse than a Nemesis," he exclaimed. "Do you think they would believe you now?"

"I'd produce the proof—the living, breathing truth!" cried the woman.

"You mean that with a trumped-up game you would get me into the water, eh?"

"A trumped-up game? No, I would produce Condon Powers!"

"Impossible, woman! Come, your threats have no terrors for me!"

"Then, what mean those charred papers in your grate?" and the woman pointed across the room.

Markham's eyes followed her gesture and then turned again to his visitor.

Suddenly a terrible thought flashed through the rabbit's brain.

He recalled his succesful struggle with the strange man in that same room.

Why not battle this woman with his long hands as he had silenced the man?

He thought twice and then left the chair. At the same time Lucy Blair stepped back.

"Stand where you are!" she said with terrible earnestness, as she covered Markham's face with her finger. "Money king and murderer, advance one step and your life won't be worth the flower in the carpet beneath your feet. I can produce the victim of your wiles. I can produce Condon Powers. You doubt me? I hold in my hands the fate of Markham, the millionaire. I am desperate. I want money. God help me, I must have cash—cash! Refuse, and I'll take my secret to the courts of yonder city."

Further chapters of this highly interesting story will appear next week. See the Ledger's special premium offers on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Coincidences.

Some marvelous things happen in this world of ours, things that seem to set at defiance all ordinary rules for the calculation of chances. Here are two incidents warranted to be true in every respect, the one illustrating one thing changed.

A young married man, who had called at a lawyer's office and asked how he was advised if he knew a certain lawyer in the army, one Lieutenant Styles, who was on trial for some trivial offense against discipline. He replied that he did.

"Well, said the lawyer, "I have just been reading his history. I asked you about him because I remembered when you spent a year or two at West Point when you were a lad. Had he a brother named Simpson Styles?"

"Not that I ever heard of," replied the young man.

"I never heard of him, either. But this morning's mail from that city brings me the narrative must have got two families mixed.

After some conversation on other matters the caller took his leave.

In the afternoon of the same day he went out with his wife "house-hunting." The first house offered suited them so well that they closed a bargain for it at once. It was the large apartment house. When they were about to take their departure the young man's wife said:

"Well, let us see who our next-door neighbor is to be."

Whereupon they looked at the card tacked upon the door next to the one that led to their own apartment. It read:

"J. Simpson Styles."

Investigation showed that he was the brother of Lieutenant Styles.

The coincidence reminded a friend of a newspaper reporter who had been detailed to go to a city a hundred miles distant to write up a certain public affair. His work being done, he was waiting at the station for the train to take him home. While there he saw the principal orator of the meeting walking up and down the platform.

Obeying a sudden impulse he approached him and introduced himself as a reporter for the "Tribune, but without giving his name.

"Glad to meet you, sir," said the orator. "Your home is in——, I presume?"

"Only temporarily," replied the reporter. "I am from Hartford, Connecticut."

"Why, remarkable coincidence! I know just two persons in Hartford, and that was thirty years ago. One of them was Colonel Thompson, with whom I became acquainted while taking a trip out west one summer; and the other was Dick Thompson, an exceedingly bright young woman, whom I happened to meet in Washington in Washington once. Ever know them?"

"Yes, sir," said the reporter. "They are my father and mother."

Perhaps some may think the most singular thing about these two coincidences is that they happened to the same young man, at least so far as the two incidents are told. Others, possibly, may consider that the most wonderful part of the whole story is that a man and his wife were suited with the first flat at which they looked.

The Savage Bachelor.

The Sweet Young Thing—Did you know there is a man in the moon no longer? Some one has discovered a woman in the moon.

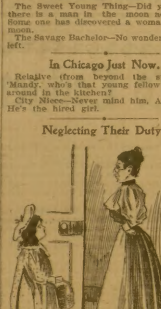
The Savage Bachelor—No wonder the man left.

In Chicago Just Now.

Relative (from beyond the suburbs)—Mandy, who's that young fellow snoopin' around in the kitchen?

City Niece—Never mind him, Aunt Ans. He's the hired girl.

Neglecting Their Duty.



Aunty (to Elsie, who has been out to look for eggs)—Have you found any, dear?

Elsie—No, not one; the hens are all standing about doing nothing.

Her Stipulation.

That there are still people unfamiliar with the telephone is proved by the recent experience of a New Hampshire man.

He wished to have telephonic connection between his house and a new one built for his son's summer residence. The best route took the wire over the cottage of an old lady, to whom he applied for permission to make the slight use of her roof that was necessary.

The old lady gave her consent, but made a firm stipulation at the same time.

"I'm willing you should run wires over my roof and hitch 'em wherever you see fit," she said, pleasantly, "provided you don't use 'em after nine o'clock at night. That's my bed time, and I'm a light sleeper at best, and the noise of folks talking overhead would be sure to keep me awake."

Annoyed.

"Did you say that I scattered money right and left in my campaigns?" asked Senator Sorghum.

"No, sir."

"Well, somebody said it, and it was a mighty mean trick. The first thing I know they'll have the people who were going to vote for me anyhow thinking it's a sheer waste of money to go up to the polls and cast an honest ballot."

The Husband's Idea.

Wife—How people did gaze at my new hat. I presume they wondered if I've been robbing a bank.

The Wisconsin legislature has forbidden the use of living rooms for manufacturing purposes.

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Romance of a Cheese.

It was a beautiful cheese, all mottled green and yellow, and strong—oh, my! Clarissa Jenkins was quite sure she had never seen or heard or smelled such cheese as that before. The price was more than she could well afford, but she felt that she must have it even if she were obliged to economize on diamond tiaras or sealskin sacques. She knew it would please her little brothers and sisters so much, in her imagination she could already see the baby stretching out its tiny dimpled hands for the coveted dainty.

But alas! Her fond hopes were not to be realized.

Riding home in the elevated train she laid the precious parcel on the seat beside her, for the car was not at all crowded. (This is fiction, remember.) A few stations further on, a tall, handsome young man entered the car. Attracted by the girl's bright, intelligent face and perhaps also by the delicate aroma of the roquefort, he sat down beside her, hoping that some happy chance would make them acquainted. And he was not disappointed. Even as he sat down the girl uttered a piercing shriek and cried: "Oh, my! You are sitting on my roquefort!" But the warning came too late. Mr. Algernon Smith was one of those men who always sit down like pile-drivers. Consequently the poor cheese was crushed beyond recognition. All that remained intact was the odor, which was very fetid, indeed—so much so, in fact, that the other passengers hurried from the car, leaving these two alone.

"I am very sorry," said Algernon, humbly, "it was such an exquisite cheese, too. I fear it cannot be replaced."

"Then you, too, are a connoisseur of roquefort!" exclaimed Clarissa, forgetting her loss in her joy at meeting a kindred spirit.

"My friends call me so," replied Algernon, modestly. "But tell me what I can do to atone for the mischief I have caused?"

"I fear there is nothing to be done," answered the maiden, "except to be sorry," she added with a smile.

"And I am sorry," he said, earnestly, "and yet I am glad, too."

"Glad!"

"Yes, for if I had not smashed that roquefort I should never have known you, and then my life would have continued to be as empty and worthless as it was before."

"Oh, Algernon!" she murmured. (She had seen his name in the lining of his hat; that is how she knew it.)

They are married now, and if you should call on them in their cozy little Harlem flat, you would see, in a glass case over the mantelpiece, the crushed and formless remains of what was once a roquefort cheese.

Architectural Jokes.

The builders of the old churches in England were not so serious but that they now and then perpetrated a joke, even in stone. On more than one of their creations they carved in relief a scene representing a monk preaching solemnly to a flock of geese. The same humorous spirit is sometimes to be detected in the domestic architecture of early times. Mr. Hissey gives an instance. Just upon the boundaries of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire formerly stood a rambling old farm house. The living room was long and low, and on the center beam which went across the ceiling was inscribed this legend: "If you are cold, go to Hertfordshire."

This seemingly inhospitable invitation was explained by the fact that one-half of the room was in one county and one-half in the other. The fireplace was in Hertfordshire.

Bluffed Him Right Off.

He—Miss Clara, I have a question to ask you; although of ancient origin it is ever new, and—

She—Oh, never mind asking it, I was at a minstrel show last week.

A man often escapes from danger by not realising that the danger exists.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

Proof Positive.

"Yes," said the scientific passenger, "it is a well-established fact that dark-haired women have much more violent tempers than their blond sisters."

"Are you sure of that, mister?" asked the meek little man across the aisle.

"There is no doubt about it, my dear sir," said the fat one. "But have you a personal interest in the matter?"

"Well, yes," replied the meek individual, "I've always suspected that my wife bleached her hair, and if what you say is true I know it now."

A Misunderstanding.

"Do you think you can earn enough to support me?" asked her father.

"Two?" answered the young man, quizzically. "I've only asked for one of your family. Who else are you going to ring in on me?"

A weak-willed man misses many opportunities to do wrong.

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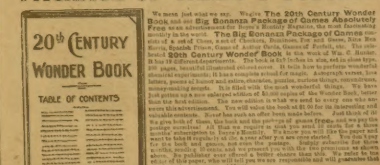

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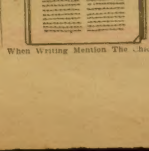

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES.

Uncertainty.

A little king, with manners nice,
Bore as he trudged through Spanish ice
A banner with this strange device,
"I. O. U."

Quoth he: "No matter where I look,
I gaze on that. It won't be shook.
The first line in my copybook
Was 'I. O. U.'"

Oh, how can life have many charms
When, in the midst of war's alarms,
The motto on one's coat-of-arms
Is "I. O. U.?"

Needed a Rest.

"Now, Harold, I want you to promise me that you will not like a little gentleman while you are at the table."

Harold—I will, ma, if you'll let me off the rest of the time.

Had Been There.

"Ma, can I go over to Sallie's house and play a little while?" asked 3-year-old Polly.

"Yes, dear; I don't care if you do."

"Thank you, ma," was the demure reply. "I've been there."

TWO GASTRONOMIC OPINIONS.

The Lamb—Mr. Sardine, I wish to

The Lamb—Lion-aise potatoes are a great favorite with me.

Johnny's Definition.

"What is the meaning of the word 'tantalizing?'" asked the teacher.

"Please, ma'am," spoke up little Johnny Holcomb, "it means a circus procession passing the school and the scholars not allowed to look out."

Johnny's Reason.

Teacher—Johnny, write upon the blackboard the sentence: "Two heads are better than one." Now, Johnny, do you believe that?

Johnny—Yes'm.

Teacher—Why?

Johnny—Cause then you'll git a job in a dime museum an' make lots o' money.

Revenge.

Voice (from the top flat)—Can't you see the sign in the hall there, "No peddlers allowed in this building?"

Answering Voice (at other end of speaking tube, loud enough to be heard through the building)—I ain't a peddler, ma'am. I'm the boy from the dentist's with your new teeth.

The First "Boo!"

How many are aware of the origin of the word "boo" used to frighten children? It is a corruption of "Boh," the name of a fierce Gothic general, the son of Odin, the mention of whose name spread a panic among his enemies.

How it Was.

"So, he lost his position in Washington?" "Yes; he was a page and they turned him down."

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